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The impact of administrator and teacher leadership on the development of an exemplary arts program and its role in school

Michelle Wiebe Zederayko

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The Impact of Administrator and Teacher Leadership on the Development of an Exemplary Arts Program and its Role in School Reform:

A Case Study

By

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Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

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The Impact of Administrator and Teacher Leadership on the Development of an Exemplary Arts Program and its Role in School Reform: A Case Study

Advisor: Dr. Lenoar Foster

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of administrator and teacher leadership in school reform and on the development of an arts program in a school that was selected as a “unique case” (Merriam, S.B. 1998). The study also seeks to assess if there are any outcomes associated with the arts program that have contributed to the school’s reform or its status as an exemplary school. An additional consideration is the role of culture in supporting reform and the arts.

Participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and examination of pertinent school documents provided descriptive data that made it possible to build a picture of particular facets of successful school reform. Observations and interviews were carried out over a three month period and initial results were taken back to participants for clarification and revision to ensure that interpretations were correct.

Study findings are organized into two sections to deal effectively with the constructs of leadership for reform and the impact of the arts program in reform. The first section builds a cohesive portrait of the school’s transformation and deals with leadership from the perspective of both administrators and teachers while it delineates the similarities and differences in their perceptions of the leadership role. The second section presents an in-depth picture of an exemplary arts program, the teachers whose initiative has built the program, the program’s role in the whole school, and the program’s role in reform.

The findings indicate that there is a lack of leadership perception amongst teachers even when they engage in leadership activities on a regular basis. The study results also reveal the differing conceptualizations of similar behaviors that are employed by administrators and teachers in the same school. Additionally, the findings point to the deterministic power of teachers over their programs.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Fullan (1993) has suggested that schools have been engaged in the process of reform and restructuring for the past 30 years but “that we have been fighting an ultimately fruitless and uphill battle” and that “we need a different mindset about educational change” (p. 3). Lieberman and Miller (2000) have contended that “schools are feeling a tremendous press to improve student achievement levels and the quality of the teaching force” (p. 50). Dilger (1997) has expressed the view that “teachers’ success in accomplishing the serious and difficult tasks of learning new skills and unlearning practices and beliefs about students and instruction that have dominated schools to date will make or break the reform agenda” (p. 3).

In his Foreword to Sergiovanni’s *Value Added Leadership: How to Get Extraordinary Performance in Schools*, (1990), Deal posed the question, “What can be done to improve America’s schools?” Deal then commented that while “improvements are necessary, differences arise concerning what should be done. Yet beneath the disagreements, there is consensus on a fundamental premise: nothing will happen without leadership” (cited in Sergiovanni, 1990, p. v). Dilger (1997) observed that in reform “the arts can serve as boundary breakers and offer a means to overcoming the traditional ‘turf wars’ where veteran teachers fight to preserve their territorial subject area rights. Art educators are in a unique position to assume leadership in American education if they choose to do so” (p. 11).

One facet of school reform arises in the literature that stresses the importance of the arts in schools. This literature suggests that strong arts programs transform the
learning environment. Oddleifson (1994) has observed that, “through the arts, the whole school ‘ecology’ changes. High standards become the norm in all subjects” (p. 447). Wilson (1999) has declared that “the arts transform learning and schools” (cited in Longley, p. 16). This is an important consideration because “the bottom line for school reform ... is increasing student achievement” (Kaplan & Evans, 1997, p. 2).

Longley (1999) in the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities report titled *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*, noted that leadership is identified as one of the “critical success factors” in providing “opportunities for higher levels of achievement” and in building strong arts programs (p. 13). The support of the principal is a vital component both in reform and in allowing the arts to play a role in reform. In addition to principal support, however, effective teachers of the arts are also an essential element of a strong arts program. Teachers who remain “actively engaged in their art form” make the best teachers of the arts (Longley, 1999, p. 13). Committed principals and teachers are both integral elements in the arts program at any school.

School culture is also an important facet of school reform. School culture is also an important factor if reform includes consideration of the arts. The nature of reform results in changes within a school. As well, a school that shifts from having the arts on the periphery to including the arts as an important element in each student’s education will require a change in structure. Fullan and Miles (cited in Kaplan & Evans, 1997) have stated, “changes in structure must go hand in hand with changes in culture... Neglecting one or the other is a sure fire recipe for failure” (p. 2).
Statement of Problem

An in-depth study of a school that has undergone a successful reform and has developed an exemplary arts program in spite of many challenges has the capacity to provide a greater understanding of the reform process in a school. It also provides a picture of the nature of leadership within the reform process and the extent to which an arts program may impact on the reform in the school. It was the purpose of this study to determine the role of teacher and administrator leadership in the reform of a school and in the development of an exemplary arts program. More specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1) What was the impact of administrator and teacher leadership in school reform and on the development of the arts program?

2) What were the outcomes associated with the arts program that contributed to the school’s reform and its exemplary status, if any?

3) What elements within the school’s culture supported reform and the arts program?

Importance of the Study

“Responding to wide-ranging educational reform is an inescapable reality of teachers’ work” observed Hargreaves (1997, p. vii). With reform an “inescapable reality,” understanding the nature of successful reform is valuable. The school reform literature documents that the ultimate goal of reform is to increase student achievement (Brandt, 2000; Clarke, 1999; Dilger, 1997; Kaplan & Evans, 1997; Lieberman & Miller, 2000; Sizer 1995). While the ultimate goal of reform is clear, the proposed means of achieving successful reform are varied. Bell (1993) has declared that “leadership, especially at the school level, has begun to attract more attention as a
key ingredient in any successful school reform” (p. 597). Clarke (1999) has observed that “schools cannot improve student learning in a dormant state” and the result is that “human energy is the key to school reform” (p. 2). Cawelti (cited in Dilger, 1997) has proposed a pattern of key elements in school change. These elements are “performance standards, authentic assessment, interdisciplinary curriculum, school-based shared decision-making teams, block scheduling, business alliances/ community outreach, and instructional technology” (p. 3). Bruer (1993) has noted that since A Nation at Risk was published in 1983:

there has been a steady stream of reports, recommendations, articles, and books... ...tell[ing] us that to improve schools we must change curricular content, raise school standards, embrace site-based management, increase school and teacher accountability, lengthen the school year, and allow parents to choose which school their child attends (p. 1).

In Getting Reform Right: What Works and What Doesn’t, Fullan and Miles (1992) have posited that the seven basic themes of successful reform are that: “change is learning – loaded with uncertainty; problems are our friends; change is resource-hungry; change requires the power to manage it; change is systemic; and all large-scale change is implemented locally” (p. 752). Fullan and Miles (1992) have also noted that “when it comes to reform, partial theories are not very useful. We can say flatly that reform will not be achieved until these seven orientations have been incorporated into the thinking and reflected in the actions of those involved in change efforts” (p. 748).

Cortines (1999) has observed that:
Reformers have come to espouse a systemic perspective, viewing the different components of the education system as fundamentally interrelated. The challenge for educators is to create schools that help students acquire the knowledge, skills, confidence, and motivation to succeed in the increasingly sophisticated workforce and as parents and citizens.

Because the arts possess the power to play a role in meeting this challenge, an arts education must be fundamental, not incidental. I consider the arts to be the “fourth R” – a basic component in the curriculum and a basic tool in the school reform arsenal (cited in Longley, p. 5).

Cortines’ comments reflect the growing belief that the arts may be instrumental in school reform. In the foreword to the National Endowment for the Arts’ document *Schools, Communities, and the Arts: A Research Compendium*, Welch (1995) stated that, “the research supports our long-held view that the arts are valuable to a complete education” (p. ii). Conducting research in a school that has undergone a successful reform effort and that has a vital arts program has the capacity to add to the understanding of school reform and the role of the arts in reform.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study the following definitions were used:

*The Arts* - encapsulate the disciplines of music, visual arts, dance, and theater/drama (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1995).

*Exemplary School* – one that encourages collaboration, respect for others, and self-discipline along with individual achievement. Exemplary implies that the school serves as an illustration of a human institution involving complex relationships in
unpredictable situations but that is still known and admired in its community (Gaskell, 1995).

*Instructional Leadership* – a responsibility which is shared between teachers, department heads and principals that provides direction, resources and support for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school.

*School Reform* – changing schools so that student achievement is increased. This may involve changes in curriculum and instruction, school organization, student services, community involvement, school culture (Fullen & Miles, 1992). School reform is about improving teaching and learning (Cortines, 1997).

*Restructuring* – “represents a purposeful change in patterns of rules, roles, and relationships within schools. Restructuring refers not just to change but to the type of change that moves the school away from traditional or bureaucratic characteristics and practices. Improving student achievement lies at the heart of the restructuring movement” (Shouse, 1998).

*Strong Arts program* – one in which music, visual arts, dance, and theater/drama are provided with appropriately trained staff, proper facilities, materials, equipment, and adequate time in the school schedule (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1995).

**Assumptions Inherent in the Study**

For the purpose of this study, the following were assumed:

a) Effective principals and vice-principals value arts curricula in the same manner that they value all subject areas deemed foundational to the education of students.
b) Effective principals and vice principals who care about the arts will provide
support for the arts
program in their schools by accommodating scheduling concerns, supporting fair
budgets, hiring and retaining competent faculty, and encouraging an atmosphere
where the arts are valued.

c) Effective arts teachers have a strong commitment to the arts they teach and are
involved in a leadership role in the ongoing development of arts education.

The Role of the Researcher

Creswell (1994) has observed that “qualitative research is interpretive research.
As such, the biases, values, and judgement of the researcher become stated explicitly
in the research report” (p. 147). Creswell (1994) has also suggested that statements
about past experiences of the researcher are therefore valuable.

The researcher in this study had an understanding of the arts in schooling
gained from personal experience as a fine arts department head in a large urban high
school in Canada. The researcher had, in addition to administrative experience in
schools, many years of experience as an art teacher and some experience as a drama
teacher. In addition to practical experience, the researcher’s academic experience
included a degree in fine arts and post-graduate work in art education.

The possible bias provided by the researcher’s arts background was mitigated
by her experience as an integral member of the administrative team in a school that
prided itself on its academic programs. Furthermore, the researcher had also spent
several years teaching English in a high school setting and had thus internalized many
of the expectations of high school humanities courses.
Delimitations of the Study

This study was confined to a secondary school that was identified nationally in Canada by the Canadian Education Association's Exemplary Schools Project as having successfully engaged in a whole school reform and as having a strong arts program. This study was restricted to a single school because this "unique" case was able to provide a very real picture of the ways in which teacher and administrator leadership in an inner city high school promoted the development of an improved school with a strong arts program. This case also provided an insight into the impact of the arts program on school reform.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The intervening years between the publication of the 1983 report *A Nation At Risk* and today have shown that there are many ways to approach school reform. Dilger (1997) has also stated that “the ultimate goal of education reform is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to increase student achievement” (p. 4). Kaplan and Evans (1997) have declared that “the bottom line for school reform, however, is increasing student achievement” (p. 2). Arts educators have contended that the arts are capable of increasing student achievement across the curriculum (Boston, 1996; Cortines, 1997; Darby & Catterall, 1994; Eisner, 1997; Fowler, 1994; Martin 1994).

A clear vision of the importance of the arts in both educational reform and in education, an understanding of the role of the arts program in school culture and reform, and a picture of the attributes of what constitutes an exemplary arts program lead to a consideration of the role of school leadership in a school-wide reform effort that involves the arts.

Following is a review of the pertinent literature that outlines:

1. Efficacy of school leadership in school reform
2. The role of administrator and teacher leadership in school reform
3. The impact of the arts on school culture in school reform
4. Rationales for the inclusion of the arts as part of each student’s education
5. The arts in school reform

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6. The place of the arts within the whole school program

7. The components of a worthwhile arts program

8. The challenges facing leaders trying to develop strong arts programs that are part of a reform effort

Efficacy of School Leadership in School Reform

As Bell (1993) has observed, leadership is “a key ingredient in any successful school reform” (p. 597). Schmoker (1996) has noted that “schools improve when purpose and effort unite. One key is leadership that recognizes its most vital function: to keep everyone’s eyes on the prize of improved student learning” (p. 103). “If we are to sustain our improvements and build on the strength and commitment of educators, we need to address the capacity of schools to lead themselves. We need to rethink both leadership and capacity building” noted Lambert (1998a, p. 18).

Rethinking leadership in schools that are involved in reform is necessary because “change initiatives do not run themselves” (Fullan & Miles, 1992, p. 751). Lambert (1998a) has proposed that leadership be defined “as the reciprocal learning processes that enable participants in a community to construct meaning toward a shared purpose” (p. 18). Shared purpose is an important element of successful school reform (Fullan, 1993). Schwahn and Spady have said, “leadership and productive change begin with the creation of a compelling organizational purpose” (p. 45).

An important factor in the process of changing schools is dependent upon the leadership in the schools. “Because principals can influence many of the elements central to a teacher’s professional life – time, coverage, space, materials, money, personnel – they have an extraordinary opportunity to work with teachers to shape a
school environment in which teachers become students of their own and others’ teaching” observed Barth (1990, p. 59). As such, Barth (1990) has specifically noted that leadership must come from both administration and teachers. This view is echoed by Lambert (1998) who has commented that, “school leadership needs to be a broad concept that is separated from person, role, and a discrete set of individual behaviors. It needs to be embedded in the school community as a whole. Such a broadening of the concept of leadership suggests shared responsibility for a shared purpose of community” (p. 5). Goldring and Rallis (1993) have also pointed out that teacher leadership is desirable and note that “empirical research supports the importance of the principal in promoting teacher leadership in schools” (p. 40). Alvoid (1999) observed that “leadership must include the entire staff” (p. 16). Garmston and Wellman (1995) have declared that “in an adaptive school, leadership is shared – all the players wear all the hats. All the players must have the knowledge and skill to manage themselves, manage students, or lead other adults. Leadership is a shared function in meetings, in staff development activities, in action research, and in classrooms” (p. 11).

Sergiovanni (1990) observed “if we are ever going to make a dent in the problems we face in public education, we’re going to have to find ways of permitting talented teachers to play a much larger role” (p. 21).

Short and Greer (1997) have noted that, as schools change “the role of leadership and the organizational climate and culture of the school are restructured” (p. 175). Fullan (1998) has commented that “reform often misfires because we fail to learn from those who disagree with us” and “thus it is a mistake for principals to go only with like-minded innovators” (p. 8).
Leadership in the school must be understood to be different from management. Bennis (1989) has asserted that organizations can have problems when they “are underled and overmanaged” (p. 18). Sergiovanni (1990) has also affirmed that “too many schools, school districts and state systems of schooling are overmanaged and underled” (p. 17). Portin et al. (1998) have defined the differences between leadership and management in schools and suggest that “it is useful to think of the principal’s role as a balance between leadership and management” (p. 5). The leadership portion of the principal’s role covers “supervising the curriculum, improving the instructional program, working with the staff to identify a vision and direction for the school, and building a close and congruent working relationship between the school and its community” (Portin et al., 1998, p. 5). Donmoyer and Wagstaff (1990) have noted that:

An instructional leader is someone who has a significant impact, for better or worse, on student opportunities to learn in the classroom. This definition eliminates the leader/manager distinction. Instructional leadership is no longer a separate function distinct from a principal’s managerial duties; rather, the easiest, most direct way for a school principal to exercise instructional leadership is through the managerial tasks he or she engages in every day (p. 20).

Leadership in schools involves instruction and learning because that is the business of schools (North Carolina State Dept., 1991, p. 40). Understanding the nature of instructional leadership enhances awareness of the dual responsibility for teachers and administrators to be involved in the leadership of the school. Pellicer et
al. (1990) have culled the work of numerous researchers to derive a definition of instructional leadership that provides a balanced picture. Pellicer et al. (1990) have “define[d] instructional leadership as the initiation and implementation of planned changes in a school’s instructional program, through the influence and direction of the various constituencies in the school” (p. 31). Keefe and Jenkins (cited in Pellicer et al., 1990) have defined instructional leadership as “the principal’s role in providing direction, resources and support to teachers and students for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school” (p. 31). Kaplan and Owings (1999) have indicated that “assistant principals can become key agents in schools’ shared instructional leadership” (p. 81) but that this implies a change in the way that principals view their role.

Pellicer et al. (1990) have also indicated that “instructional leadership is a shared responsibility” and “is not limited to the school administration” (p. 31). Smith and Scott (1990) have described the collaborative school as one in which “teachers are professionals who should be given responsibility for the instructional process and held accountable for its outcomes” (p. 2). Furthermore, “the principal who shares instructional leadership with teachers does not give up the responsibility for leadership.” Moreover, “this principal is a more effective instructional leader because empowered teachers are more likely to maximize their own potential” Murphy (1990, p. 33) has asserted. Heslep (1997) has also observed that “leadership never involves just one person; it always involves two or more persons. Second, those involved in leadership are not just a collection of isolated individuals; rather, they interact with one another” (p. 73). Thus, gaining an understanding of the role of instructional
leadership in a school involves a consideration of both administrative leadership and teacher leadership. Because “improved student learning” (Schmoker, 1996, p.145) is a goal of reform, instructional leadership is an important consideration.

**Administrator Leadership**

Effective school administrators whose practice has a positive impact on “teacher commitment” exhibit some specific behaviors.

Principal behaviors associated with these effects on teachers included framing school goals, communicating school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, supporting professional development sessions, and providing incentives for learning” (Blase & Blase, 1999, p. 353).

In addition to their own qualitative study, Blase and Blase (1999) looked to “Sheppard’s (1996) synthesis of existing studies” (p. 352) to generate this picture of effective administrative behaviors. Blase and Blase (1999) have noted, however, that “thus far, empirical studies have generated only scant descriptions of the behaviors of effective instructional leaders and their impact on teachers and classroom instruction” (p. 352)

“A leader cannot effect instructional change without understanding the kinds of content and meanings conveyed to students” Kanpol and Weisz (1990, p. 16) have observed. The North Carolina State Department report *Promises to Keep* (1991) has indicated that “a general knowledge of all instructional areas in the curriculum should be expected of any effective school administrator, and perhaps such knowledge in
English, mathematics, science, social studies, and physical education may be present as a result of any individual's early education, but the same is not always true regarding arts education" (p. 41).

A principal who knows very little about the arts may find it difficult to be an instructional leader in a system choosing to include the arts as part of the basic curriculum because "without this understanding of the arts education program, knowledgeable decisions cannot be made, instructional improvements cannot be undertaken, and quality programs cannot be planned" (North Carolina State Department, 1991, p. 41). Carter and Klotz (1990) observed "that most principals receive training in administration, not teaching or curriculum or philosophy of education; thus, most are simply unprepared to lead instruction in their own building" (p. 37). This is an important consideration because as Longley (1999) has noted "principals create the expectations and climate in the school building, and their support for arts education is essential" (p. 12).

Glickman (1991), however, has questioned the notion that the principal must be the instructional leader for a school to be successful. Rather, he has suggested, the principal should "cherish" teacher expertise and act as an "...educational leader who mobilizes the expertise, talent, and care of others" (p. 8). Glickman (1991) has advocated that the successful educational leader "supports, distributes, and mobilizes the work of teachers as instructional leaders" (p.8). Schlechty (cited in Brandt, 1993) has also said, "I don't consider the principal as instructional leader, instead, I see the principal as leader of instructors" (p. 11). Seidel (1994) observed that, "administrators and, by happy coincidence, program evaluators, are generalists. Effective evaluation
of the arts program does not require that the principal be an expert in the arts, so much as a good manager and facilitator of the experts that are available” (p. 13). Seidel (1994) added, however, that “the underlying concept is simple, but its operation can be complex (p. 13). In order to “support, distribute, and mobilize” effectively the principal as educational leader would benefit from at least a rudimentary knowledge of the arts. After all, “in the final analysis, curriculum and instruction is the central mission of the school, and the administrator is the leader of the school” (North Carolina State Department, 1991, p. 40).

Leaders in schools have the capacity to affect the arts program because, “the principal is the most potent factor in determining school climate” (Barth, 1990, p. 64). Oddleifson (1994) has contended that bringing the arts into prominence in schools presents a challenge because “most educators believe that meaning can be arrived at merely through analysis and reason” (p. 447). “Administrators... must know about the true value that arts education holds... in order to wholeheartedly implement specific curricular programs and policies” Burnham (1997, p. 14) has observed. As the North Carolina State Department Promises to Keep (1991) document has suggested, “with the renewed threat of cutting back the arts each time there is a budget crunch, the need to better educate the public is an obvious one; however, many school administrators, who did not have arts education as a part of their ‘basics,’ also need to be better informed as to how the arts should and can function in education” (p. 45). Seidel (1994) reiterated this view when he said “given that the arts are of value to the school’s work, principals have some key leadership responsibilities in making sure that the arts become a viable contributor to the school’s educational plan” (p. 11).
Persuasion and authority or power is also a necessary ingredient. Power, as Gardner (1990) has pointed out is, “derived from knowledge, from information” (p. 63). A principal who is knowledgeable about the worth of the arts in education will have the power to help educate those who do not understand their vital importance (Longley, 1999).

In order for the arts to be considered basic, many within the school need to learn about their importance. Barth (1990) noted that:

the most powerful reason for principals to be learners as well as leaders, to overcome the many impediments to their learning is the extraordinary influence of modeling behavior. Do as I do, as well as I say, is a winning formula. If principals want students and teachers to take learning seriously, if they are interested in building a community of learners, they must not only be head teachers, headmasters, or instructional leaders. They must, above all, be head learners (p. 72).

Principals “must foster the development of the arts program’s goals in relation to the school’s mission and goals; they must empower – and expect – arts educators to deliver a program that works to meet those goals; and they must work with the arts educators to evaluate and improve the arts programs” observed Seidel (1994, p. 11). For this reason arts teachers may need to communicate the value of arts education to their principals (Burnham, 1997).

It is important for the principal to value a strong arts program enough to consider its development as a goal of the school so that facilitation of school goals includes the arts (Seidel, 1994). Goldring and Rallis (1993) have pointed out
principals “must integrate, facilitate, and coordinate the many aspects of the internal functioning of the school so that goals and visions can be realized” (p. 120). This view is echoed by Pellicer et al. (1990) who have suggested that “schools with evidence of effective instructional leadership exhibited general agreement among all segments about the primary purposes of schooling” (p. 35). Garmston and Wellman (1995) have referred to the importance of “shared knowledge” amongst all the players in the school “because when values, roles, and work relationships are clear, decisions about appropriate behavior are easy” (p. 11).

**Teacher Leadership**

Teacher leadership is an important component of school reform and in the development of a strong arts program (Burnham, 1997). The comments on leadership by Barth (1990), Seidel (1994), and Glickman (1991) all allude to the importance of teacher participation in the leadership role of the principal.

Leadership on the part of the arts teachers can provide the curricular knowledge that administrators may lack and thereby provide strong instructional support in the arts area if administrators and teachers work as a team in the arts arena (Burnham, 1997; Seidel, 1994). When Glickman (1991), observed, that the principal should act as an “...educational leader who mobilizes the expertise, talent, and care of others” (p. 8), he implied that there is equal responsibility for successful teacher leadership. Schlechty (cited in Brandt, 1993) has remarked that “instructional leadership and curriculum leadership are imbedded in the job of teaching” (p. 11). Principals and teachers must work together to create a climate in which teacher leadership is a viable part of the program of the school because as Fullan (1996) has
commented "there is considerable evidence that neither top-down nor bottom-up strategies work by themselves" (p. 421).

In his discussion of leadership in terms of organizational culture, Schein (1992) proposed another reason why it is important for teachers in the arts to be leaders. Engaging in successful reform and developing an impressive arts program in a school may demand a cultural shift on the part of many of the school's constituents and shifts in culture bring about "anxiety" particularly as "old habits must be given up before new ones are learned" (Schein, 1992, p. 375). The arts teacher as leader can help the school in transition to "create order out of chaos, and ...provide ... assumptions as an initial road map into the uncertain future" (p. 376).

Barth (1990) has noted that "when teachers are enlisted and empowered as school leaders, everyone can win" (p. 128). This is so because teachers are more likely to understand the concerns of "one of their fellows" (Barth, 1990, p. 128) than is someone who does a different job within the school. When teachers in the arts are enlisted as leaders, they can work together with administration to define goals thereby "communicating the message that the arts are expected to become an important part of the school's work" (Seidel, 1994, p. 11).

Seidel (1994) also has observed that teacher leadership is important because arts leaders will then be involved in the development of a mission and goals. This means "arts educators will be held to the higher standards that they themselves are working with the principal to set" (p. 11). Seidel (1994) has claimed that one outcome of striving to meet goals will be to encourage "the arts educator to effectively and fairly evaluate and shape arts programs" (p. 11). This is significant because, as
Oddleifson has stated, the arts are meaningful if they are taught with "high standards" (Oddleifson, 1994, p. 450).

The Impact of School Culture on Reform and the Arts Program

Program development does not happen apart from the culture of the school. As Weiss (1995) has remarked, however, "the interaction plays out in both directions. People's values will affect their receptivity to incoming information that is at variance with those values. Sometimes incompatible information will be rejected out of hand, but usually the interaction is more subtle" (p. 577). Understanding school culture goes beyond the implications of the importance of teacher leadership in alleviating the anxiety caused by cultural shifts (Schein, 1992), because they point to the necessity of a value shift as well. Since "school culture includes the shared beliefs, values, norms and standards that are expressed through the behavioral patterns of school members, along with any external structures that may influence these elements" (Maxwell & Thomas, cited in Schwieker-Marra, 1995, p. 3), it is important to understand and consider school culture. Fullan and Miles (cited in Kaplan & Evans, 1997) have observed that "changes in structure must go hand in hand with changes in culture... Neglecting one or the other is a sure fire recipe for failure" (p. 2).

Louis, Marks and Kruse (cited in Kratzer, 1997) have also noted "while it may be easier for policymakers to imagine how to restructure schools rather than change their culture, the latter also appears to be a key to successful reform" (p. 3). Kratzer (1997) has also pointed out "that changing the formal structure was not enough; a change in school culture was essential, requiring time, training, assistance and the opportunity to develop mutual respect and trust" (p. 24). There is another important
factor in changing culture because “information helps people figure out where the
textbook problems are and which potential solutions hold promise for coping with them

Changing school culture is an attainable goal. Schwieker-Marra (1995) has
pointed out that “it was generally found that changes were more lasting and successful
when they were initiated by members of the immediate school culture than by those
outside of the school’s culture” (p. 3). This again points to the importance of teacher
and administrator leadership within the school. “For change to be successful, the
initiators must understand how the culture will accept the proposed innovation and
where the culture itself needs modification” declared Schwieker-Marra (1995, p. 3).
In his discussion of how principals can influence a school’s culture Moorthy (1995)
has said “the first rule in effecting a school’s culture is that the principal must
understand the school culture before attempting to alter it” (p. 4). The commitment
required to change school culture is worthwhile, however, because as Jones (1996) has
observed, “there are indications that in the presence of strong cultures, significant and
widespread improvements in instruction are possible and that strong cultures can be
created” (Jones, p. 6).

Fullan (1996) has highlighted other facets of school culture that must be
considered. He has noted that:

Reculturing refers to the process of developing new values, beliefs, and norms.

For systemic reform it involves building new conceptions about instruction
(e.g., teaching for understanding and using new forms of assessment) and new
forms of professionalism for teachers (e.g., building commitment to continuous
learning and to problem solving through collaboration). Restructuring concerns changes in the roles, structures, and other mechanisms that enable new cultures to thrive (p. 422).

Rationales for the Inclusion of the Arts in Education

Boyer (1995) has argued that it is impossible to define what the school curriculum should be without first addressing the question, “What is an educated person?” (p. 16). Boyer’s (1995) answer is that being an educated person:

means developing one’s own aptitudes and interests and discovering the diversity that makes us each unique. And it means becoming permanently empowered with language proficiency, general knowledge, social confidence, and moral awareness in order to be economically and civically successful. But becoming educated also means discovering the connectedness of things (p. 16).

Boyer (1995) has proposed a curriculum that has the capacity to produce educated people. The arts are an integral component of this curriculum because “a quality education develops proficiency in the written and the spoken word, as well as a useful knowledge of mathematical symbol systems and an understanding that the arts provide countless ways to express ourselves” (p. 18). He has also noted that:

it is tragic that for most children the universal language of the arts is suppressed, then destroyed, in the early years of learning, because traditional teaching does not favor self-expression and school boards consider art a frill. This is an ironic deprivation when the role of art in developing critical thinking is becoming more widely recognized (p. 20).
Schlechty (1990) observed that “women and men who do not work readily with ideas, symbols, and abstractions, who cannot solve problems in a self-conscious way, and who have no categories into which they can place information will find themselves in difficulty” (p. 32). “Serious study in the arts is one of the best ways to educate a young person” Perrin (1994, p. 452) has declared.

“The arts are integral to the development of cognitive skills such as listening, thinking, problem-solving, matching form to function, and decisionmaking” (Goldberg & Philips, 1992, p. v). Cawelti and Goldberg (1997) noted that “the knowledge, skills and habits of mind acquired in studying a core subject are understood to be applicable to learning in other areas (such as mathematics to science) and to future success in life” (p. 7). The belief that the arts teach critical thinking skills very well has been one of the enduring arguments for their inclusion in education (Eisner, 1992). “With the increased demand for education to focus on critical thinking skills, creative problem-solving skills, and a more holistic approach to integrated learning, arts education becomes even more important for students” (North Carolina State Department, 1991, p. 17). The acquisition of problem solving skills has also been cited as a benefit of arts education (North Carolina State Department, 1991; Eisner, 1999; Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg, Haynes, Kessler, Schwab-Stone & Schriver, 1997; Greene, 1995; Perrin, 1997; Seidel, 1996).

Another facet of the school reform movement has suggested that schools need to teach students more about values and culture. “Arts education can help us not only learn how to develop an appreciation for learning and working with people from different cultures, but it can help us learn how to be better thinkers, how to be better
workers and how to live a higher quality of life” said Mary Hatwood Futrell (cited in ArtsEdNet, 1999, p. 2). Not only is arts education seen as a viable means of values teaching, it is also viewed as a means of advancing school reform because of its role in increasing student understanding of culture, (Fowler, 1994). Much of what we know about culture is transmitted through artifacts, and thus, arts education can engender a new understanding of culture (Burnham, 1997).

Cawelti and Goldberg (1997) have asserted that “the arts are the embodiment of human imagination, the record of human achievement, and the process that distinguishes us as human beings. We form human communities and cultures by making art – through stories and songs, drama and dance, painting and sculpture, architecture and design” (p. 1). Burnham (1997) has observed that “the only place that man, if not most of our students, receive any type of exposure to cultures other than their own is through the arts education they receive at school” (p. 12). Additionally, Barber (1997) has stated that “democracy, depending for its liberty on a free civil society, will do better as the arts do better” (p. 17). Understanding other cultures will grow increasingly more important as business becomes ever more global (ArtsEdNet, 1999).

Sylwester (1998) has presented powerful support of the unique role the arts play in both brain development and maintenance. He has stressed that “use it or lose it is a cognitive reality for neural systems” (p. 34). This means that the arts, in their capacity to allow us to exercise neural systems that are not often activated in daily life, play an important role in brain function (Egan, 1997; Jorgenson, 1996; Sylwester, 1998). The neural systems of which Sylwester (1998) speaks are those which deal
with emotion and attention. Since emotion and attention are considered "the pathways into all rational cognitive behavior" (Sylwester, 1998, p. 35) neglecting them means that we are valuing only one half of the equation. Goleman (cited in Sylwester, 1998) has indicated that valuing half of the equation means that the half we do value does not get its full due because we "value the conscious conversation and solutions, not the unconscious doorway to the solutions" (p. 35). Jorgensen (1996) has noted that, "emotions and feeling provide the bridge between rational and nonrational processes" (p. 5). "Emotions... play an important role in determining what we pay attention to, how we make personal decisions, and what we remember" (Damasio, cited in Brandt & Perkins, 2000). Damasio (cited in Fullan, 2000) "presents compelling evidence that emotions are indispensable for rational decisions because they inform and narrow the range of choices in solving problems and making decisions (p. 220). Sylwester (1998) asked, "is spelling really biologically more important than melody, when both express culturally significant sequential information?" (p. 33). In this way, the arts can be seen to be as essential as reading, writing, and arithmetic (Bennet, cited in North Carolina State Department, 1991). Together these two frameworks offer a powerful rationale for the inclusion of arts education as "... the birthright of Everychild... in order to have access to understandings that are exclusively extended through aesthetic symbols" (Darby & Catterall, 1994, p. 301). It is for this reason Siegesmund (1998) has suggested "that the soundest epistemological rationale for art is grounded in the philosophical arguments, curricular structure, and pedagogic methods that increase cognizance of sensory concepts to the end of developing skills in reasoned perception. This understanding is an integral part of the normative goals of school to build
cognitive skills” (p. 212). As Bruner (cited in Eisner, 1991) pointed out, “different forms of language make different forms of knowing possible” (p. 123). Burton (1994) has been adamant that “we must not condone expediency in order to maintain the arts in education but we must speak directly of its value in and of itself” (p. 492).

Burnham (1997) observed that:

if the arts can never be studied on their own terms or in terms of their own basic content and ways of working, if they always must be studied as humanities disciplines or as supports to other disciplines, the specific knowledge and skills associated with the arts and the artistic mode of thought will not be present in a student’s education. If the arts can be a presence in education only as a means to something else, they may have a presence, but it is not the presence of an educational basic (p. 8).

The North Carolina State Department document titled Promises to Keep...Arts Education Task Force Report (1991) has echoed that, “as with any major branch of knowledge, we teach the arts because they are domains of knowing worth learning and transmitting, and they are directly related to the general goals of education” (North Carolina State Department, 1991, p. 8). Burton (1994) has observed that:

If ever we are to achieve a balance in education between specialist learning and integrated learning, between learning in the arts and learning through the arts, between making and appraising, then it will have to be based on clear understandings of development: of what constitutes content, and for whom that content exists and why (p. 491).
The Arts in School Reform

Cortines (1997) declared that “arts education is integral to school reform” (p. 6). “The best schools have the best arts programs. Excellence in education and excellence in the arts seem to go hand in hand” Fowler (1994, p. 4) has asserted. Cortines (1997) noted that “arts education is not only crucial to quality learning and teaching, but it has the potential to transform education in ways that no other discipline can” (p. 6). There is ample evidence in the literature that the arts have the capacity to transform student learning (Boston, 1996; Egan, 1997; Eisner, 1996; Greene, 1995; Murfee, 1992; Oddleifson, 1992, 1994, 1996; Perrin, 1997; Sylwester, 1998). Cortines (1997) has noted “if all school reform is about improving teaching and learning, and if quality teaching and learning incorporate the best of the arts, then school reform must also be connected to the arts” (p. 7). “The arts, particularly music, dance and visual art, develop neural connections and body/brain connections which further learning in many areas, including math, reading, writing, and general language development” pointed out Seidel (1996, p. 2). The literature documents the role of the arts in school reform (Boston, 1996a; Cortines, 1997; Fowler, 1994; Greene, 1994; Murfee, 1995; Oddleifson, 1994; Perrin, 1994).

Martin (1994) has illustrated that “there are indications that in Detroit, Chicago, and Indianapolis, that the high schools which stress the arts all have stronger attendance, higher student test scores, and a higher percentage of graduates going on to higher education in comparison to other public high schools in these cities” (p. 35).

*Schools Communities and the Arts: A Research Compendium* (Welch, 1995) listed six
studies that have been conducted to show gains in student achievement as a result of participation in strong arts programs.

In talking about the research for *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*, Wilson (cited in Longley, 1999) has observed “wherever the research teams went in arts-based schools, they were greeted by smiles. ... The occupants of arts-centered schools see themselves as members of communities – communities that they have a role in creating and sustaining” (p. 16). Principals in one school district in the study “said that the arts help them in so many areas – early learning, student engagement, parental involvement – that keeping the arts strong is worth the investment” (Longley, 1999, p. 21). One principal has seen that “the arts keep kids in schools. If they don’t come to school, you can’t teach them. So I’m going to have arts in my school” (Longley, 1999, p. 25).

Longley (1999) referenced the Miami-Dade County Public School district because it “is continuously working to keep the solid base of opportunity offered by ‘regular’ schools in balance with the choice of a higher level of opportunity in ‘specialized’ schools. The arts have been a key to that balancing act” (p.26). One of the most telling examples of the impact of the arts was a school in Milwaukee:

Twenty-one years ago, before Elm elementary became Milwaukee’s Creative Arts Elementary School; its students’ achievement test scores placed the children in the district’s lowest 10 percent. After one year as an arts magnet school, although 50 percent of the neighborhood’s students remained in the school, the students’ achievement test scores placed them in the district’s upper 10 percent. (Longley, 1999, p. 27).
While the study contended that there were many factors contributing to the rise in test scores, "parents, teachers, school administrators, arts supervisors and students" all pointed to the positive impact of the arts on the achievement of the students (Longley, 1999, p. 27).

Cortines (cited in Longley, 1999) has provided a realistic perspective on the role of the arts in school reform.

We know, of course, that arts education is not the magic pill that will simultaneously reform schools and boost student achievement. Systemic reform in the 1990's has taught us that improving education will mean paying attention to all parts of the educational system. But the arts are a basic part of any program of reform. Again, arts education must be fundamental, not incidental (p. 6).

Boston (1996) said "for the arts to display their powers, they must be embedded and valued in the curriculum" (p. 13). "As we look for answers to the dilemma of improving our schools, the power of the arts is one avenue for learning that we should explore" Perrin (1994, p. 452) has observed.

The Place of the Arts within the Whole School Program

The arts have the capacity to increase student understandings in other subject areas (ArtsEdNet, 1999; Oddleifson, 1996; Perrin, 1992). "The new basics do not devalue reading, writing, and computational skills, but require the inclusion of habits of mind such as creative thinking and innovative application of knowledge" (North Carolina State Department, 1991, p. 10). Fowler (1994) has suggested that "the arts complement the sciences because they nurture different modes of reasoning" (p. 5).
Oddleifson (1994) has observed that “the arts provide connections that allow lateral leaps between cognitive domains, which can produce sudden scientific insight” (p. 448).

Because study in the arts increases literacy (Boyer, 1995; Darby & Catterall, 1994; Eisner, 1991, 1997; Elias et. al., 1997), its inclusion in the basic curriculum has had a positive effect on the whole school experience (Burnham, 1997). Perrin (1994) contended “as we look for answers to the dilemma of improving our schools, the power of the arts is one avenue for learning that we should explore” (p. 452). As Oddleifson (1994) observed, however, this requires “a consideration of how schools can ‘retool’ themselves” (p. 452). Change is needed because “many of our schools and children are still manacled by the rigid adherence to outdated paradigms of intelligence, learning, instruction, and assessment that have their roots in the eighteenth-century view of the world” (Darby & Catterall, 1994, p. 318). Change in schools, however, is difficult since “in a century of public schools, little structural change has occurred in classroom teaching” (Glickman, 1991, p. 5). Nevertheless, “despite the sometimes impassioned rhetoric of school reform, the ways of educating children have remained remarkably durable over the last hundred years” Goodman (1995, p. 2) has observed.

Darby and Catterall (1994) refer to the “…continuing policy of marginalizing the arts in education…” (p. 301). Because “in most people’s minds science is the only way to generalize about the world” (Eisner, cited in Oddleifson, 1992), the arts are viewed as subjects that provide pleasure and not much else (Greene, 1994). Changing attitudes will require a concerted effort to educate the constituents at all levels of
education (Burnham, 1997; Oddleifson, 1994; Perrin, 1994). Oddleifson has contended that:

a services and products “delivery system” is needed to support arts and general educators as well as administrators in a process of school redesign through the arts.... The arts must become an integral part of the educational process. They must be taught as primary subject matter, both as specific skills (technique) and as cognitive process (thinking).

The foundation of such a system must be a new educational philosophy, which restores a balance between the rigid set of beliefs about knowledge, the mind and intelligence which currently informs our educational system, and the more flexible system of beliefs represented by the arts (Oddleifson, 1992, p.3).

Oddleifson (1992), speaking for The Center for Arts in the Basic Curriculum, has also advocated that the whole structure of schools needs to change to accommodate the arts as an integral part of the education process.

Glickman (1991) has suggested that part of the reason for the inertia in schools is the result of professionals going “about the business of teaching and operating schools in ways they privately admit are not in the best interests of students. The reasons for doing so are plentiful – we all live with district policies, state regulations, traditional school structures, mandated curriculum alignment, community pressures, and limited resources” (p. 4). Fullan (1993) argued that change doesn’t happen because the education system is:
fundamentally conservative. The way that teachers are trained, the way that schools are organized, the way that the educational hierarchy operates, and the way that education is treated by political decision makers results in a system that is more likely to retain the status quo than to change (p. 3).

The Components of A Worthwhile Arts Program

An effective arts program should have some clearly identifiable characteristics. Oddleifson (1992) has observed that, “for the arts to be truly dynamic they have to be performance based. One cannot properly learn art without also doing art” (p. II). Realistically, however, students must have “the benefit of a fully integrated experience with the arts. Accomplishing this necessitates technical mastery of a performance aspect. Conversely, the experience of performing matures more fully when it is allowed to develop along with an historical and analytical understanding of the arts” (Oddleifson, 1992, p. II). Talking about art is not the same as “thinking and problem solving in the medium itself” (H. Gardner, cited in Oddleifson, 1992).

Hanna (1992) has stressed that the value of activity is an important part of the arts because it is through doing that the arts “grab” students’ attention “by offering immediacy and active involvement of mind and body” (p. 603). When the Office of Educational Research and Improvement conducted the study Blue Ribbon Schools: Outstanding Practices in the Arts (1994) recognition was given to schools whose art programs met certain criteria. Blue Ribbon arts programs were ones where the students were actively involved in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the arts they were studying. Burnham (1997) has declared that “quality arts education balances the disciplines of performance and production with study of aesthetics
(philosophical inquiry, criticism, formal elements/principles and theory) and important historical, cultural, and stylistic investigations” (p. 14).

The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations’ report *Opportunity-to-Learn Standards for Arts Education* (1995) details appropriate standards for Arts education in each of the disciplines. In each discipline emphasis is placed on the use of a curriculum which is comprised of “a balanced and sequential program” (p. 46). In art the balanced and sequential program consists “of making art, looking at art, learning about art and artists, and responding to art” (p. 46). In music the “curriculum comprises a balanced and sequential program of singing, playing instruments, reading music, listening to music, and improvising and composing music” (p. 18). “The theatre curriculum is a balanced program of script writing; acting; designing; directing; researching; comparing dramatic forms, genres and styles; analyzing and constructing meaning; and understanding context” (p. 29).

Boston (1996) has pointed out that a worthwhile arts program is not the “limited activity that most adults remember from their own schooling” (p. 4). Rather it is a program “based on substantive and rigorous content” (p. 4). Boston (1996) has defined arts education as education where “children learn to convey ideas, feeling, and emotions by creating their own images and performing dance, music, and drama. They learn to decode and understand the historical and cultural messages wrapped up in works of art. The also learn to analyze, critique, and draw reasoned conclusions from what they see and hear” (p. 4). Worthwhile arts education is not limited to a single approach but includes theoretical and practical components (Boston, 1996;
Challenges Facing Leaders Trying to Develop Strong Arts Programs

Many of the problems and questions surrounding the issue of the arts in schools are raised in the literature. Darby and Catterall (1994) have noted that “the questions regarding the arts in education no longer seem to be why and who but how and what. How can policy-makers, administrators, curriculum planners, and teachers include the arts in every classroom, not just those of the privileged few?” (p. 320). By beginning with the contention that the issue is no longer why and focusing on the impediments, Darby and Catterall (1994) have drawn attention to major issues. The leading question becomes one of how these players can do it. Education and support are an integral issue in motivating administrators and teachers to include the arts in every classroom (Brewer, 1997; Burnham, 1997; Perrin, 1994).

Another issue was raised by Hodsoll (1989) when he said “there is a gap between the stated commitment and resources for arts education and what is actually happening in the schools – course requirements in the arts are often cast as alternatives” (p. 86). Within a school, the administration has a determining effect on policy and scheduling (Kaplan & Evans, 1997). Local school administration cannot determine graduation requirements, but it can strive to create an environment that is sustaining to a strong arts program (Seidel, 1994). The question is one of how to show policy makers within the school that making the arts a priority is a viable alternative so that they are willing to make necessary changes in the school program (Hutton Clapp, 1997).
"The problem is to translate the rhetoric into action and, more importantly, to consider arts education, like education in other subjects, as requiring serious and sequential study" (Hodsoll, 1989, p.92). Seidel (1996) has commented that strong programs "have a sequential curriculum in the arts" (p. 3). This implies major shifts in the school curriculum that school administrators need to consider in the areas of scheduling and organization. Darby and Catterall (1994) have presented another facet of this issue in a defense of the cognitive value of the arts:

Recent decades have brought growing interest in the arts as a form of cognition, based on the idea that like language with its inherent set of symbols, the arts have their own symbol systems that involve cognitive processing, even if these processes cannot be easily measured by traditional empirical methods (p. 303).

Seidel (1994) noted, however, "if the arts are to be a legitimate part of our schools, arts programs must be evaluated, and evaluated well" (p. 15).

Changing the current system so that the arts are considered an integral part of the core curriculum requires a radical shift in attitude (Perrin, 1994). During the process it is important to remember that, as Janas (1998) has cautioned "change is not an isolated event, but a series of stages that requires time. Remember that the process of educational change is lengthy and may take years from goal-setting to stable establishment" (p. 14).

Summary

The basic aim of school reform is to increase student achievement (Conway & Jacobson, 1990; Dilger, 1997; Kaplan & Evans, 1997). Because the arts can change
the ecology of the school and encourage high standards, they have the capacity to be instrumental in school reform (Boston, 1996; Cortines, 1997; Martin, 1994; Oddleifson, 1994; Perrin, 1994; Welch, 1995).

In a time of country-wide educational reform, "the contribution of the arts is essential, particularly in view of recent studies which demonstrate the positive impact the arts have on learning" asserted Murfee (1992, p. 4). There is persuasive evidence to suggest that the arts should be included as an integral part of every child's education. The arts are worthwhile "as a bona fide means of exercising the intellect" (Murfee, 1992, p. 3) and should be an integral part of the basic curriculum.

If worthwhile arts programs are to develop, there must be an awareness of what constitutes exemplary practice. First class practice in the arts includes a broad range of opportunity and study. Strong arts programs include rigorous study in history, serious development of critical faculties, a deep understanding of aesthetic principles and a commitment to creative, individual expression (Boston, 1996; Burnham, 1997; Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1995; Graham, 1992; Oddleifson, 1992). An effective arts program must engage students in both practical and theoretical study.

Accepting the arts as essential in education necessitates changes in the structure of schools, and this requires that school administration take an active leadership role in the development of strong arts programs. Arts teachers must also accept a leadership role as schools move to accept the arts as an important area of study. It is important that administrators and teachers be actively involved in the
development of the arts program because effective instructional leadership is a shared responsibility (Lambert, 1998; Pellicer et al., 1990; Smith & Scott, 1990).

The change in school structure brought on by arts program development will likely necessitate a shift in the culture of the school, which is another reason for the involvement of administrators and teachers. Reform efforts within an organization are more successful if constituents initiate them (Fullan 1996; Moorthy 1995; Schein, 1992; Schwieker-Marra, 1995; Weiss, 1995).
CHAPTER THREE
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how a large urban Canadian high school with an ethnically diverse population and "a reputation as undemanding, dangerous, and catering to non-university-bound students" (Gaskell, 1995, p. 33), initiated a school-wide reform and became a school, she further asserted, "with improved retention rates, competition, and success in examinations" (Gaskell, 1995, p. 33). More specifically, this study sought to investigate the role of the arts program as a factor in school reform. The following research questions framed this study:

1) What was the impact of teacher and administrator leadership in school reform and on the development of the arts program?

2) What were the outcomes associated with the arts program that contributed to the school's reform and its exemplary status, if any?

3) What elements within the school's culture supported the arts program?

A single site case study approach was used to respond to the research questions because of its appropriateness to the nature of the inquiry. Yin (1994) has suggested that, "the case study strategy is most likely to be appropriate for 'how' and 'why' questions" (p. 21). Moreover, a single case study also affords the opportunity to be immersed in the circumstances that may illuminate the inquiry. Thus the case study method provided a means of understanding the experience of reforming a school.
Source of the Data

The source of the data was a secondary school (grades eight through twelve) in a large city in British Columbia, Canada. This secondary school was selected as a "unique sample" (Merriam, 1998, p. 62) because of its particular characteristics. Patton (1990) indicates that "cases are selected for study because they are of particular interest given the study's purpose" (p. 169). The site was identified as being an exemplary school and as having strong arts programs through the National Report of the Exemplary Schools project conducted under the auspices of the Canadian Education Association (CEA) in 1994. In addition to being selected as an exemplary school, the research site was also identified as having a strong arts program that had an impact on school-wide reform.

The research site was chosen in 1994 to be part of the Exemplary Schools project because it was a school that had reformed itself to become a place that was a model of an inner city school. Ten years ago the research site had a "reputation as undemanding, dangerous, and catering to non-university-bound students" (Gaskell, 1995, p. 33). At the time of the study, however, the school had improved retention rates, was seen as a safe place to be, and had many graduates who went on to post-secondary education. The research site was in a working-class area of a large city and had a culturally diverse student population. This secondary school strove to meet the needs of its diverse student population by favoring a school-within-a-school approach. In the midst of multiple programs "at some point a student is bound to come in contact with the school choir, band, drama, or visual arts" (Kelly et al., 1995, p. 80). Thus, in many ways, the research site represented what Merriam (1998) has referred to as a
case "selected for its very uniqueness, for what it can reveal about a phenomenon, [or for] knowledge that we would not otherwise have access to" (p. 33). Indeed it was because the research site had managed to carry out a successful reform effort and build a strong arts program, that it was a worthy site in which to study the impact of teacher and administrator leadership on school reform. It was a site in which it was also possible to look for connections between the reform effort and the strong arts program.

The school was on the east side in a large Canadian city and was "one of the few B.C. secondary schools designated inner-city" (Kelly et al., 1995, p. ii). In its identification as exemplary, the cultivation of leadership was cited as being a key factor. The school was also exploring the possibility of being designated as the arts magnet school for the east side. Together the factors of: successful reform, leadership, and a commitment to the arts indicated that this school was a unique site worthy of study.

The value of this study approach can be gleaned from a further definition of the special features of the case study. Merriam (1998) has observed that, "qualitative case studies can be characterized as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic" (p. 29). In this case examining a school that had undergone a successful reform effort while considering the importance of leadership had the capacity to provide meaningful information in other settings. The strong arts program in the school also provided the potential of gaining an understanding of the role of the arts program in the reform. As Merriam (1998) has said, the particularistic nature of the case study means "it can suggest to the reader what to do or what not to do in a similar situation [and] it can examine a specific instance but illuminate a general problem" (p. 30). The descriptive
nature of a case study can “illustrate the complexities of a situation – the fact that not one but many factors contributed to it [and] have the advantage of hindsight yet ... be relevant in the present” (Merriam, 1998, p. 30). Studying the nature and impact of reform in a school where the arts program was also a factor had definite merit.

Conducting a case study can provide the researcher with a great deal of meaningful information. In describing what a case study is Merriam (1998) has said:

Case study knowledge is:

♦ More concrete – case study knowledge resonates with our own experience because it is more vivid, concrete, and sensory than abstract;

♦ More contextual – our experiences are rooted in context, as is knowledge in case studies. This knowledge is distinguishable from the abstract, formal knowledge derived from other research designs;

♦ More developed by reader interpretation – readers bring to a case study their own experience and understanding, which lead to generalizations when new data for the case are added to old data; and

♦ Based more on reference populations determined by the reader – in generalizing as described above, readers have some population in mind. Thus, unlike traditional research, the reader participates in extending generalization to reference populations (Stake, cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 31, 32).

Further, Patton (1990) has noted that “… good case studies can provide more valid portrayals, better bases for personal understanding of what is going on, and solid grounds for considering action” (p. 54).
Contrary to what might be expected, single site case studies are not limited in meaning to the case being studied. Although case studies do provide rich descriptions of a particular situation, they also provide knowledge that may be useful in other settings as well. Yin (1994) noted that single-case studies have the power to inform whole fields of inquiry. In referring to a famous single site study, Yin (1994) commented that its value is, “paradoxically, its generalizability” (p. 4). Merriam (1998) has also observed that, “insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research” (p. 19). Although case studies do provide a view of a single site, they are generalizable. Smith and Glass (1987) have pointed out that:

The only safe basis for generalizing is by careful logical analysis about the similarities and differences between the sample in the study and some other group. In this way the basis for generalizing from a case study is the same as the basis for generalizing from an experiment. Knowledge builds up gradually, and theories based on data are judged to be adequate only to the extent to which they can account for the data at hand (p. 257).

Choosing a case study approach for the current inquiry was legitimate because there was congruence between method and situation. Yin (1994) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). Merriam (1998) has added “the single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study, the case” (p. 27). Smith (1978) and Stake (cited in Merriam, 1998) further define the case study
with the terms \textit{bounded system} and \textit{integrated system} (p. 28). Merriam (1998) defined a bounded system as being one "in which the boundaries have a common sense obviousness, e.g. an individual teacher, a single school, or perhaps an innovatory programme" (p. 28). In this light the current inquiry fit the case study description because, as a single school, it was clearly a bounded system. Merriam (1998) also indicated that "the bounded system, or case, might be selected because it is an instance of some concern, issue, or hypothesis" (p. 28).

\textbf{Procedures of the Study}

Smith and Glass (1987) have pointed out that "methodologists who advocate naturalistic research base their arguments on the principle that social action is context-dependent. ... Understanding behavior removed from its context is impossible" (p. 256). Spending time in the school was necessary to balance interview information with observed behavior. Thus, in order to gain a rich understanding of context, research was conducted on several separate occasions spending time in the school and individual classes to gain a sense of attitudes and behaviors. In order to gain a sense of leadership issues spanning many years, interviews with three past principals were conducted between site visits. The interviews with past principals also allowed for more reflective questions about teacher and administrator leadership during the reform. Interspersing school visits with interviews allowed for a comparison of perceptions and observed reality and provided a view of behavior in context. Additionally, research visits occurred in late September, late October, and in mid November of 1999 to provide a view of the school, the personnel and the arts program during different months of the year (see Appendix A) and to provide a more vivid
picture of the lived experience of the school. The initial visit in May of 1999 was one day in duration and was intended as an introduction to gain permission to conduct research at the school. Although the initial visit was not part of the formal research, it did provide information about the administrators, the teachers in the arts program, and the school structure. During the initial visit, administration provided the current school planner and the course selection guide to provide initial familiarization with the school. After the Internal Review Board of The University of Montana granted approval in September 1999, the first research visit was conducted. This visit lasted for four days from Monday to Thursday and was comprised of two or three class periods of observation in each of the arts classes. During this visit, administration provided access to school accreditation files, registration numbers from the 1998/99 school year for all arts classes, copies of the 1979 and 1994 Accreditation documents, a current school Student Planning Guide, the current course selection guide, staff lists, and school board reports. The fine arts department head also provided access to all of her files, which yielded school administrative meeting notes, course outlines for the department, school board fine arts committee meeting minutes, and department goals. In addition, the visit meant that contact could be made with administration and all fine arts teachers. At the end of the visit, thank you notes were distributed to all participants via their staff mailboxes. This effort had valuable consequences because previously wary participants were much more open and welcoming on the second visit.

The first visit primarily focused on in-class observations and informal discussions with teachers and administrators. Notes taken during classroom
observations provided a clear record of what had occurred in each class. Conversations were not transcribed although notes were taken as a record of the information gained. Administration allowed widespread access to files of community and school information that were being compiled for the School Accreditation in 2000. Each arts class was visited for at least two full classes so that observations of teacher interactions of students could be made. Because more than one class was observed for each teacher, observations of different grades were also possible.

In the time between visits, notes taken during the first visit were collated and typed. Additionally, the school Student Planning Guide listed all previous principals at the school so the names of pertinent past principals were documented. Three past principals were interviewed. These past principals were at the school immediately prior to the school's reform (1982 – 1990), during the school's reform effort (1990 – 1994) and after the school's identification as an exemplary school (1995 – 1999). A search of the city phone book yielded addresses so that letters could be sent out requesting interviews. The letters plus consent forms included stamped, self-addressed envelopes to facilitate their return. The consent forms also requested information regarding phone numbers and times when consenting past principals were available for interviews. Interviews with past principals were carried out as soon as possible following the return of the forms. In the interval between the September and the October visit, a brief preliminary report was written to document initial observations and to disseminate to participants for their feedback.

In mid October of 1999, three weeks after the first visit, a second visit of two day's duration was arranged. The visit was arranged in consultation with the
department head, but individual teachers and administrators were reminded of interview appointments via letters. Because the school operated on a two-day timetable cycle, a visit of two days duration allowed for observation of one rotation of the classes and was a reasonable time period for watching classes in the cycle. During this visit in October, individual teachers and administrators were interviewed (see Appendix D) and asked for opinions on the preliminary report, which they had all read. The feedback from both administrators and teachers provided valuable member checks of initial assumptions. Furthermore, response to the preliminary report worked as an instigator for discussion and encouraged teachers to think about the issues being researched so that they were able to respond to the research questions more informatively.

The final two-day visit occurred a month later in November of 1999. This was the final visit because, at its completion, all participants had been interviewed and observations from class visits were becoming repetitive. In the time between the second and third visits, the past principals were interviewed. The past principals’ perspective of the reform effort provided greater insight that helped inform the final interviews. Requesting research subjects’ opinions on the research acted as a viable means to double-check the accuracy of researcher assumptions. The researcher checked understanding frequently during discussions by asking for clarification or by saying, “I am hearing.... Is this correct?” During the second and third visits, responses were also gleaned from other staff in the school in order to gain a whole school perspective on the role of the arts in the reform effort and in the school. Time was
spent in the halls between classes as well as in the staff lounge thereby providing the perspective of staff outside of the arts department.

Data collection was also assisted by the time frame of the study because conducting research on separate occasions with time between observations and data collection allowed data analysis to begin after the first visit, which helped to inform data collection on subsequent visits.

While on site, informal interviews with teachers and administrators were conducted (see Appendix D) the whole time paying close attention to the focus delineated in the protocol (see Appendix A). Information from the interviews allowed a basis for comparison with informal teacher comments and provided a comprehensive picture of administrator attitudes and approaches over a span of many years. Observational data was also recorded about the facility and the operation of a variety of arts classes. In addition, photographs of the facilities were taken. Documents collected included enrollment patterns, vision and mission statements, student organizers, old accreditation reports, school budget reports, school course selection guides, fine arts department meeting minutes and fine arts course outlines. This was in accordance with Patton (1990) who has emphasized the importance of "going into the field" and "getting close to the people and situations being studied in order to personally understand the realities and minutiae of daily life, for example, in a program" (p. 46).

The case study followed a protocol to help increase the reliability of the research (Yin, 1994). Study of three different documents outlining approaches for program evaluation assisted in the development of the protocol (Appendix A). These
documents provided a broad understanding of school evaluation practice and helped to identify salient inquiry focuses. The documents also provided examples of interview question format and reporting approaches. The first, *A Collaborative Model for School and Program Evaluation: Lethbridge School District #51* (Walker, Wamica, & Gary, 1993); the second, *Procedures and Guidelines for Evaluations: Canadian Educational Standards Institute* (1998); and the third, *High School Leaders and Their Schools: Volume II: Profiles of Effectiveness* (Pellicer et al., 1990). Yin's (1994) comments on case study questions were pertinent:

*The heart of the protocol is a set of substantive questions reflecting the actual inquiry. Two characteristics distinguish these questions from those in a survey interview.*

*First, the questions are posed to you, the investigator, not to a respondent. The questions, in essence, are your reminders regarding the information that needs to be collected, and why. In some instances, the specific questions also may serve as prompts in asking questions during a case study interview; however, the main purpose of these questions is to keep the investigator on track as data collection proceeds* (p. 69).

While the protocol indicated initial focus, Patton (1990) has pointed out that “qualitative inquiry designs cannot be completely specified in advance of fieldwork” (p. 61). Yin (1994) has also referred to flexibility on the part of the researcher so the protocol was not intended to be a definitive procedure, but rather was intended as a guide to keep the researcher on track so that the research questions were addressed during the period of observation. Basic adherence to the protocol was important,
however, in order to insure that the research stayed on topic and did not stray as interesting features outside of the proposed inquiry come to light. Yin (1994) has observed that, “the need to balance adaptiveness with rigor – but not rigidity cannot be overemphasized” (p. 57).

Interviews were transcribed by hand as they occurred because of participant reluctance to be taped. In addition, copious field notes were taken throughout the observation phase. This made possible the comparison of field notes with transcriptions as an initial test of internal validity. The use of a camera was also employed whenever possible to aid the researcher in explicit facility documentation for later interpretation. Photography assisted the researcher by saving precious field time since information in the photographs could be recorded at a later time (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 101). Because photographs were of facility only, no human subjects were depicted and therefore permission and confidentiality issues were not a concern.

The use of multiple sources of evidence including interviews, observational notes, photographs and collected documents was an important component of triangulation of the evaluation (Patton, 1990; Yin, 1994). Member checks both during the interviews and during the report writing phase were also an important part of verification. Because the interviews were handwritten, participants were frequently asked to verify their responses so that changes could be made in the transcription if necessary. Also because there was time between visits, the same issues could be raised on more than one occasion to add a further verification step to hand written recordings of the responses.
**Instrumentation**

This study used a semi-structured interview format (see Appendix D). The interview protocol was prepared in advance. It consisted of a series of open-ended questions that were chosen to reflect the focus of the study and to provide information from the study participants that would be enlightening. The questions were carefully drafted to generate informative responses without biasing the participants. The exact nature of the interview questions was determined by the research questions, however, the format of the questions was derived from studying different program evaluation documents and from a consideration of the research site. The program evaluation documents were: *A Collaborative Model for School and Program Evaluation: Lethbridge School District =51* (Walker, Wamica, & Gary, 1993); *Procedures and Guidelines for Evaluations: Canadian Educational Standards Institute* (1998); and *High School Leaders and Their Schools: Volume II: Profiles of Effectiveness* (Pellicer et al., 1990).

The interview questions were on printed pages with space between questions to provide an accurate and efficient means of recording participant responses. This also facilitated transcription of the interviews and helped to assure accuracy. Because participants were asked the same questions in the same order, consistency of inquiry was assured.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis followed the eight steps articulated by Creswell (1994, p. 155). Analysis began with transcription and sorting of the multiple sources of data. Initially,
the transcribed data was roughly sorted according to the questions at the heart of the study. Thus, the data was sorted into focus themes provided by the research questions. Once sorting had been completed, a holistic reading of the collected data began. Patterns that emerged from the holistic reading themes were then assessed. Because this was primarily a descriptive case study, the patterns discovered were matched to the related evidence found in the literature. The pattern matching process not only assisted in understanding the data collected, but it also contributed to the internal validity of the study (Trochim, cited in Yin, 1994).

**Verification Steps**

Validity was assessed using member checks "taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from which they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). Because the school was visited on four subsequent occasions with a space of time between each visit and with the added benefit of interviews with administrators between each visit, the member checks assisted greatly. The initial four-day visit in September 1999 was written into a draft that was forwarded to the department head for dissemination to members of the department. A separate copy of this report was also forwarded to the school administration. Department members and administrators were able to read and critique the draft, thus providing member checks of recorded information. Any documentation collected while on site was also used to check for accuracy of assumptions and for clarity of recorded observational information. During class observation, participants often made comments that were also recorded. Participants were fully aware that recording was taking place. Also, informal conversations with
teachers occurred before school, at lunch, and after school. Although conversations were informal, participants were eager to talk about their school, the reform effort, and specific arts program initiatives. Information gleaned through these conversations was regularly assessed through repeating what had been heard and asking for participant clarification. As well, the fact that observation was carried out in visits of two to four days duration over a three month period helped to increase the validity of the findings (Merriam, 1998).

Lincoln and Guba (cited in Merriam, 1998) have said reality is "a multiple set of mental constructions ... made by humans; their constructions are on their minds, and they are, in the main, accessible to the humans who make them" (p. 203). Thus Merriam (1998) has pointed out that "because human beings are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research, interpretations of reality are accessed directly through their observations and interviews. We are thus closer to reality than if a data collection instrument had been interjected between us and the participants" (p. 203).

The "Technical Report," which was produced as part of the Exemplary Schools Project in 1994, provided further triangulation. Pertinent documents collected to illuminate school history included the 1979 Accreditation Report and the 1993/94 Accreditation Report. These documents provided yet another view of the school. The observational notes on the school provided a second source of data for comparison.

The very act of doing a case study and being immersed in qualitative research meant that the research was not being conducted from a theoretical stance that
assumed valid knowledge was only attainable through reliance on scientific methodology. Therefore, as Guba and Lincoln (1989) have pointed out:

It is clear that internal validity, which is nothing more than an assessment of the degree of isomorphism between a study’s findings and the “real” world, cannot have meaning as a criterion in a paradigm that rejects a realist ontology. If realities are instead assumed to exist only in mentally constructed form, what sense could it make to look for isomorphisms? External validity, a concept that embodies the very essence of generalizability, likewise can have little meaning if the “realities” to which one might wish to generalize exist in different forms in different minds ... Reliability is essentially an assessment of stability – of the phenomena being assessed and of the instruments used to assess them (p. 236).

Guba and Lincoln’s comments have served to point out that, in this, a qualitative study, it was necessary to consider validity and reliability in different terms. Merriam (1998) has suggested that the researcher who has provided enough information to make his or her assumptions viable has provided reliability. Rich, thick description has also allowed readers the opportunity to “determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred” (p. 211).

**Writing the Case Study Report**

Writing of the case study report was assisted by the chosen data analysis approach. Because pattern matching followed the research questions, the general organization for the report was inherent in the coded data. The research questions focused the report on the impact of leadership in the school-wide reform at the
research site and on the role of the arts in the reform. As the research sought to answer
the question of how teacher and administrator leadership impacted on reform, the
analysis of the lived experience at the research site within the context of various
constituents' responses and beliefs provided a greater understanding of leadership
impact. Finally, the assessment of congruence between the goals of the school and the
goals of the arts program addressed this issue within the context of the literature and
the school's experience.

Drafting of the report began even before data collection and analysis were
completed, particularly as the study took place during different blocks of time and
member responses to the initial draft were of prime importance. Also, descriptive
writing began during the first observation because the process of writing aided in the
recognition of any existing gaps in observation. As Yin (1994) has indicated, the
drafting "can call for substantial documentation, and the best time to assemble such
documentation is at this stage of the research" (p. 143).

The report was written to provide as much anonymity for the subjects as
possible. Merriam (1998) has pointed out that "at the local level, it is nearly
impossible to protect the identity of either the case or the people involved" (p. 217),
particularly in cases chosen for their uniqueness. Another consideration was that "the
cloak of anonymity for characters may not work with insiders who can easily locate
the individuals concerned or, what is even worse, claim that they can recognize them
when they are, in fact, wrong" (Punch, cited in Merriam 1998). Nevertheless, the case
study report attempted to provide as much anonymity as possible through the use of
pseudonyms for the school and subjects.
Because as much anonymity as possible was assured at the outset of the study, names of school administrators and teachers were not used in the discussion of the findings. Anonymity was part of the initial arrangement with the participants and was an element in their signed consent to be in the study. Therefore, each administrator was assigned an alphabetical designation, and each teacher was assigned a numerical designation.

Three past principals and one current principal were interviewed to help build a picture of the school as it was moving toward the reform and to document the events in the school during and after the reform era. Three current vice-principals were also interviewed. The past principal, who was at the school prior to the reform from 1982 - 1990, was designated Principal A. Principal B was the past principal who was viewed as instigating both the reform effort and the school’s identification as exemplary. Principal B’s tenure at the school from 1990 - 1994 was her third posting at the school because she had initially been there as a teacher, then had come back as a department head and finally returned as principal. Principal B was able to provide her view of the school prior to the reform effort she instigated and during the actual reform years. From 1995 - 1999, Principal C was the senior administrator in the school. He was a vice-principal in the school immediately prior to becoming principal and had been an administrator during the reform as well as following the reform. Principal D began his tenure just weeks before the study began but also had a history with the school because he too had been a vice-principal during the reform. He had also been acting principal for a 6-month period in 1995 during the reform effort.
The school’s current vice-principals were interviewed to provide a more comprehensive picture of the current administrations’ philosophy of leadership. The school had three vice-principals. Vice-principal E came to the school in 1997 and Vice-principal F came to the school in 1995. Vice-principal G became a vice-principal in 1998, after being at the school since the early eighties as a teacher.

Within the fine arts department, the teachers were designated as follows: Teacher 1 was an art teacher who had been at the school for 18 years and had taught under all of the principals who were interviewed. Teacher 2 was the choir teacher and had taught at the school for 31 years, so he had also taught under all of the interviewed principals and been present at the school during the reform effort. Teacher 3 was the band teacher and another long term staff member who had taught both during the reform and under all of the interviewed principals in his 17 years on staff. Teachers 4, 5, and 6 had all been at the school for under 5 years although teacher 6, an art teacher, had been a student teacher at the school in 1994, and had been present at the time that the school was declared exemplary. Teacher 4, who had been at the school for 4 years, was the department head and an art teacher. Teacher 5 was the drama teacher and had been at the school for 3 years.

Further anonymity was provided because all photographs and negatives of the site were sealed in an envelope and safely stored once the report had been written. Also, because member checks were a vital part of the report writing phase, possible contentious issues had been cleared with the people involved before the report reached its final stage.
As drafts were produced, member checks also acted, in part, as reviews of the material. Comments were solicited, and whenever possible were incorporated or corroborated in the final report. Because the case study should consider alternate perspectives, reviews of the developing draft through member checks were of prime importance and helped to insure that personal bias did not unduly influence the report.

Finally, the report addressed what the research says about the case so that the greater understandings of the impact of teacher and administrator leadership on school reform and arts program development can be applied in schools that are beginning the journey.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This study was conducted in three separate visits to a single site over a three-month period during the autumn of 1999. Data were collected from three sources: interviews, observations, and school documents. Interviews were conducted with teachers in the fine arts program at the school, with current school administrators and with three past principals. In addition to being interviewed, all fine arts teachers were observed for at least two classes in order to gain a sense of the congruence of stated goals and the reality of the program. Additionally, observations were made of the school in general and semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers throughout the school. Time was spent in the staff lounge, the office waiting area and walking throughout the school during and between classes. Semi-structured interviews and observations were focused on answering the following research questions:

1) What was the impact of administrator and teacher leadership in school reform and on the development of the arts program?

2) What were the outcomes associated with the arts program that contributed to the school’s reform and its exemplary status, if any?

3) What elements within the school’s culture supported reform and the arts program?

Three past principals and one current principal were interviewed to help build a picture of the school as it was moving toward the reform and to document the events
in the school during and after the reform era. Three current vice-principals were also interviewed. This provided an administrative view of the school from 1982 to 2000.

Within the fine arts department, six teachers were interviewed and observed thus providing a view of the school, the reform and the arts program through the eyes of the teachers each of the teachers within the department. In addition to the arts teachers, other teachers in the school were interviewed to gain a sense of the role of the arts in the reform and in the school, as the rest of the school perceived it.

Three school documents were also integral to the study as sources of historical data and provided views of the circumstances surrounding the school’s reform and the role of the arts in the reform. The first document studied was the 1995 Technical Report of the Exemplary Schools Project, which was a case study of the school conducted in 1994 as part of the school’s identification as exemplary. The second document was the 1979 Report of the External Evaluation Team, which was a report written as part of the school’s 1979 Accreditation effort. The third document was the 1993 94 Internal Assessment Report for Accreditation, which was the document produced by the 1993/94-school accreditation committee as one of the requirements for accreditation.

The findings have been organized into two sections in order to address the research questions more clearly. The first section deals with leadership for reform and the second deals with the role of the arts in the school and in reform.
Leadership for Reform

A Historical Picture of the School

Situated in the low-income east side of one of the largest cities in Western Canada, this school has a long history in both the city and the community. The school was founded in 1916 as a Technical School and one of its transformational challenges has been to move beyond that designation. “The three buildings that make up the school were built in 1928, 1941, and 1954” (April 1979 Report of the External Evaluation Team, p. 44). The school’s ability to become something more than a technical school became apparent in 1993 when it was studied as part of the Exemplary Schools Project of the Canadian Education Association (CEA). In the 1995 Report of the Exemplary Schools Project, the school was identified as an Exemplary School because it met the criteria for the study.

The project identified secondary schools across Canada that had a reputation for success and examined five issues: 1) the meaning and recognition of success, 2) interaction between the school and its context, 3) influence of structures, processes, and culture of the school in fostering success, 4) the characteristics of student life in the school, and 5) services provided to students at risk of dropping out of school (Gaskell, 1995, p.vii).

In the exemplary schools project, the school was noted as having gone through a major reform. The exemplary schools project also noted that the results of the reform were instrumental in the school being declared exemplary. Also, because at the time of its designation as exemplary, the school was noted as having a particularly strong fine
arts program, it was an ideal place to study whether the arts played a role in the school’s reform or in the school’s exemplary status.

The 1979 Report of the External Evaluation Team for the school indicated that this was a truly multi-cultural school. “Its student population is comprised of at least fifteen distinct nationalities with approximately 31% being of Chinese extraction and 20% of Italian extraction” (p. 1). The report praised many things at the school but also suggested that “the staff readily admits to weaknesses in certain features of their programs” (p. 3). The report then suggested that “specifically, the External Evaluation Team would recommend that the school should seek clear statements of objectives from each subject department” (p. 4). The 1979 External Evaluation Team Report consistently referred to poorly articulated objectives and lack of “common objectives” without which “there is little hope of developing comparable expectations and standards among teachers in the same course” (p. 15).

The references to the fine arts in the 1979 report included many recommendations for improvement.

The basic problem, which vitiates the music program, is one of facilities. The Band Room urgently needs acoustical improvement.... The External Evaluation Team cannot emphasize too strongly the urgency of this need.... Immediate attention to this facility, and to the facility for Art, would greatly assist the school to develop the fine arts in the curriculum.... So often however, the arts reside on the periphery of the curriculum, used now and again as an ornament to glorify the school, but in no sense considered essential to a cultivated way of life (p. 22).
The External Evaluation team also commented that they were “concerned about the small number of students enrolling in the senior art classes” (p. 8). The team pointed out that “the physical facilities are less than satisfactory and must be considered as a very high priority in the modernization plans” (p. 8). The 1979 Report of the External Evaluation Team indicated that the drama teacher taught only two drama classes in a poor facility but was “attempting successfully to involve students of this school in Acting, Directing, and Stagecraft” (p. 29).

The 1979 Report of the External Evaluation Team was decisive in its recommendations for what were viewed as necessary school improvements because the evaluators believed “that run-down facilities ask for further vandalism, which seems to be the case in the washrooms” (p. 45). The report indicated concern over both locked or unavailable washrooms and the poor condition of the washrooms that were open. The report also indicated that the shabby state of the hallways did not encourage student respect for the school and suggested that “every effort should be made to improve the cleanliness of the halls” (p. 5). Taken together, these comments hint at a concern about both vandalism and student respect.

In its entirety the 1979 report presented a picture of a traditional school with little in the way of innovative programs. The report indicated that, “the Evaluation Team feels that for a school the size of this one, the program should be vastly increased” (p. 46). The report also created the impression of a school that was badly in need of modernization. The external evaluation committee saw the refurbishing needs as acute enough to warrant immediate attention from the Ministry of Education. The report notes that during the time of the school visit:
The External Evaluation Team contacted the Division of Facilities Services of the ministry during the week and received assurances that the plans to refurbish and update the school have now been authorized and might start forthwith. The staff, students, and parents of the School deserve a greatly improved facility than they presently have (p. 45).

While the 1979 Report of the External Evaluation Team recommended many areas for improvement it also pointed out strengths and suggested that "the school and its staff and student body labor under an inferiority complex that is completely unwarranted." One of the strengths noted in the 1979 report was the empathy of the teaching staff. "The sincere concern for students by teachers, counselors and administrators is apparent" (p. 4).

Although it was initially founded in 1916 as a Technical School, the physical plant was enlarged in 1941 and 1954 to provide space for a broader range of programs. Because of its beginnings as a technical school and because of being situated in the low-income east side of the city, the school had problems with image that affected both students and teachers. Some of the image problems were warranted because the school was noted as having a problem with vandalism. The school was also noted as having a staff that was not united in teaching objectives, which had an effect on course standards and outcomes. The old buildings were also in need of refurbishing and many of the facilities were not conducive to running strong programs. The school was multicultural and was noted for its empathetic staff.
The School Preceding the Reform Effort

When Principal A took over in 1982, he indicated that his goal for the school was “basically to provide as much support and encouragement for the kids and the teachers as I possibly could.” Principal A also suggested that he was a “great believer in a balanced program” and a “strong advocate of comprehensive programs.” When asked about his views of instructional leadership, Principal A indicated that he “didn’t really have any focus that way” but then proceeded to elaborate on his views of administration as he carried out his role as principal.

I guess it’s just doing what you can to create the kind of atmosphere to help people accomplish what they can.Trying to encourage and support at all times. Everything should lend a kind of support. The timetable is part of the game plan and the physical plant; everything should work together. Timetable is a very important part of the program. Admin can be quite creative with timetable so that it offers many opportunities.

Teacher 1, who had been at the school since the early ‘80’s and who was teaching at the school during principal A’s tenure, commented that:

He would listen and was very fair. He was a real educator with educational principles at heart. However, there were certain things he’d never move on. He was ...fatherly – if you could give arguments for why you wanted something you could usually get it but you had to be able to argue your point. He was open to innovative ideas. It was during that time that we started the early morning art class to make up for too tight a timetable.
Elaborating on her comments, Teacher 1 remarked that Principal A was “very patriarchal” and not what you would think of as a “modern principal,” but “the school was very stable when he was here.”

Principal A described the program in the school during his tenure as being comprehensive because he believed that the school was organized around some key principles. Principal A contended that:

We had sort of built in ground rules that kids had to explore all areas. There was none of this; ‘I want to be a doctor so those are the only courses I’m taking.’ So even if your gift was in academics, you had to go through and try other areas as well. And then there were a lot of things out in the community. The city is very rich in opportunity and things to offer. If you can get an artist in the school – like a sculptor to come in and work with the kids for a couple of weeks – and then get the kids out into the community too, then they have a really good experience.

Principal A did suggest that “it’s important for all teachers to be involved. I tended to talk to people to find out what was going on and what they wanted.”

Principal A commented that “I’ve been retired for ten years as of June 2000, and the school has had 3 principals since I left.” Nevertheless, he did have views on the school’s being declared exemplary and the role of the arts in the designation.

I think that the kids and the staff were pretty proud of their school and one thing builds to another. I wouldn’t ever want to push the arts to the detriment of the other programs in the school. All programs are important. A kid might not be gifted in English, but put him in a machine shop and he’s magic, and
then it doesn’t take long, and it’s amazing really, but when a kid shines somewhere pretty soon he’s shining in English too. Kids often get excluded by a lot of things and if you make one program more important than the others, you end up shutting doors for them. You can’t get it all done the first year. And extra curricular is very important in the whole thing too. You often get those union people upset about doing more, but everyone should be involved, and not everyone can coach basketball, but if you can’t do that well, maybe you can be out there washing the uniforms or something and if everyone is involved it just grows.

Principal A believed in supporting his staff and “getting their ideas” about issues but did not mention teacher leadership as one of his aims and did not suggest that it played a role in the school’s exemplary status. He explained:

You know it is a big school and it was even bigger when I was there. We certainly did what we could to support it – I don’t know if we were successful. I guess in a large school you tend to support as far as different departments go. You work with department heads and you try to make sure that the timetable is appropriate. You use programming ideas to try to get in and encourage kids to try.

Because Principal A was willing to listen to “well-argued rationales,” he did set a precedent for teacher initiative. He also held the view that “the key is to get good staff – that really has to be the number one goal of any school.”

At the end of Principal A’s tenure the school was mired in old ways of operating. To a certain extent some teacher initiative was encouraged because,
although Principal A was patriarchal, he did encourage teachers to stand up for what they believed. He recognized the central importance of good teachers and the value of a comprehensive program. He believed that students should be encouraged to explore many areas of study and he also believed that success in one subject could lead to success in another. Principal A did not have a strong vision for teacher leadership, however, and tended to be more focused on the management aspects of school operation.

The School in the Process of Transformation

Principal B (1990 – 1995), whose tenure began when Principal A left in 1990, suggested that Principal A was a “benevolent dictator” and that the school was “in the dark ages” when she took over in 1990. Since 1990 the school has had three principals and numerous vice principals whose views on the development of the school, combined with the views of long-term teachers, have informed the current picture of the school’s transformation.

Principal B, who was instrumental in leading the school through reform, and who worked to have the school achieve its exemplary rating, began her tenure in 1990. Her comments about the school when she began as principal were that:

The school had been let go – it had really good staff and very warm teachers. There are teachers there who will do anything for the kids. They put in hours and hours for the kids, and for the most part, the kids are appreciative. I worked in 12 different places and I liked the _____ kids the best. When I came, the school had no plan and no goals and nobody even asked questions.
It was appalling. We made a lot of changes and many were happy because they had some direction.

It was the most challenging job of my entire life, but I loved it. I feel that we really restructured the school with the idea of having every child with his own program.

This view of the school and its transformation is more purposive, however, than the views of other people who were in the school during that time. Vice-principal G, who has been at the school since 1983 both as a teacher and as an administrator, commented:

I think that it would be really hard to prove empirically the fine arts program contributed to the school’s exemplary status. The thing that really sets this school apart is the incredible variety of programs that it offers. No, I don’t really think that something dramatic happened and the school suddenly turned around, rather it was a long steady process that occurred and it was a perceptual thing. The exemplary schools report made people realize that the school had something great to offer and they started looking beyond just the image.

Several long-time staff members in the school shared the opinion that the school’s transformation was not a dramatic one. It was not, however, the opinion of Principal B, who was instrumental in the school’s identification as an exemplary school.

Principal B recounted that:

I went into the school as principal in 1990 and was given one mandate – to make a lot of changes. It was actually my third posting to that school – first as
a teacher, then back again as a department head, and then back again as an administrator. When I came back, I was struck immediately by the fact that the programs and the way the school was being directed was exactly the same as it had been seventeen years before. Yet the student body had changed significantly. My leadership style was totally different than my predecessor’s and a lot of the staff were totally upset. The school was locked in a time warp. The staff had become accustomed to a – now how do I say this? Oh, I guess I can say anything I want – I’m retired – they were used to a benevolent dictator. My idea was to have all participants taking part in leadership. Department heads for the most part didn’t do any leading – basically everybody went into their rooms and locked the door. I asked department heads to formulate department goals and school goals, started many committees like staff committee and finance committee. These were things that had been instituted in many other schools in the city but had never been brought in at this school. I have to confess the art program didn’t have anything to do with the reasons for the change.

Principal C (1995 – 1999) who was a vice-principal during the reform, suggested another factor in the school’s transformation. Principal C commented that:

There was a time when the school didn’t have as good a reputation as it does now and the kids didn’t realize their potential. I would say about five to ten years ago there was a shift and the teachers raised their expectations for the students and, you know, when you expect more from people they usually give it to you.
Principal C's interpretation of events again pointed to the change in perceptions and it was also echoed by Vice-principal G, who observed that:

The school hasn't really changed. It is more a perception thing. For a long time the school has had strong programs but it had this reputation as an east side school. So the exemplary schools project report changed people's perceptions and suddenly they realized that the school actually had a lot of strengths and it wasn't as bad as they thought and then they started to look for the good things and to believe in it a bit. So really, people's perceptions of the school changed more than anything and it wasn't a really sudden turn-a-round.

A notable aspect of the change in the school, however, was mentioned by several staff members who referred to the change in community ethnicity as being a significant feature. In regards to school community, Teacher 1 commented:

I think it [the school] has turned itself around. I do know that when I came here it was known as rough. It is hard to know exactly what happened. The composition of the neighborhood changed. It used to be very Italian and now it is predominantly Asian.

Teacher 2, who had been at the school for 31 years, also commented on the changing population and its effect on the climate in the school. He explained:

The school has changed a lot. When I came -- oh ...31 years ago -- there were Italians and Chinese and there was aggression, but now we're so ethnically diverse nobody knows who to fight. The kids get on much better together. They are happy to be here. The mix has changed -- we have people from
Central America and boat people and other immigrants and the attitude is different.

While staff members had differing opinions about the nature of the school's transformation, there were some notable changes that could be verified. Changes that could be empirically verified were the school's dropout rates and exam results. The school's dropout rates plummeted. Principal B, indicated:

Kids just disappeared in grade eight [their first year in the school] and it's not like they were going to other schools – they just disappeared. At the time I left about 85% of the kids were living in poverty and probably 80% were ESL.
Exam results were terrible – that is not the only measure but it is an indication.
Exam results were not only below city level but also, and even more telling, they were below the provincial level.

Teacher 1 commented that "I think it [the school] has turned itself around." Teacher 1 indicated that one distinct way that the school had changed was in the area of "exam results and drop out rates."

Exam results for 1989, as reflected in the Provincial Ministry of Education figures sent to the school, showed both a low participation rate on provincial exams as well as very low averages for the school. Ministry figures for subsequent years not only reflected a substantial increase in the exam results in most subjects but also an increase in the number of students in the school who wrote provincial exams.

Principal B believed that problems stemmed from the fact that "nobody was showing any leadership and student's needs were not being met." In response, the administration worked to improve teacher leadership and to assess ways of meeting
student needs. Principal B said, “I know that I offended a lot of teachers who had
never been asked to be responsible. Many teachers were really upset but basically
teachers were ready to do something.” She continued that one way the school did
something was that the staff “decided to introduce a number of programs to meet the
needs of the school population.” The school developed so many programs to meet the
needs of students that one of the things identified in the 1995 Exemplary Schools
Report was that the school operated an incredibly successful schools-within-a-school
model. The site had fourteen programs operating outside of what could be termed the
regular stream (1993-94 Internal Assessment Report for Accreditation, 1994) and five
initiatives to meet the needs of very diverse learners (Transitions Report, 1999).
Principal B said, “I feel that we really restructured the school with the idea of having
every child with his or her own program.” Principal C (1995 – 1999), who began his
tenure immediately after the school was identified as exemplary and who was also at
the school as a vice-principal during the reform effort, indicated that:

We did a lot of reviews of programs to continue to meet the needs of the
students and we developed new programs when we felt that needs weren’t
being met. For instance, the grade 7/8 program that has just been established –
it’s an entry-level program to increase student success as they enter the school.
A lot of the success seen at this school is because, quite apart from board and
government initiative, these programs are developed at the school level.

This view is congruent with the view of Principal B. She talked about her belief that
“it was important to have strong programs in the school and programs that met the
needs of the students.” She also talked enthusiastically about the process of developing the schools-within-a-school model.

So we set up a program for the gifted kids – SUMMIT and another parallel program for kids who were not necessarily gifted the same way but who had really strong leadership tendencies. That was FLEX. Then we got involved in getting the east side French immersion program and that was a really political thing and all kinds of effort went into that. On the other end of the scale, we tapped into Federal dollars from the Federal stay-in-school program. That was great for one year and then the Feds pulled out, but we managed to get some provincial money then. We also created a program for the special-ed. group – it was a new program – LINKS. There they rescheduled kids and worked with them in a different way. Oh, and I forgot, TUMANOS – that was the program for the first nation kids. We also started a program in grades 8, 9, and 10 for kids who were disappearing. We got a really remarkable, wonderful teacher and an assistant and started the NOVA program, which was wildly successful. It had a wait list of 85 kids. Basically, we gave the teacher the mandate – create a program. Create whatever you want to create. My basic philosophy when working with teachers is, with really good staff, pour the resources into them. With strong teachers, try to support them and with the bad teachers, well, just leave them.

Principal B stressed that having strong teachers was an integral component in a successful school. She observed that:
The other thing that I have always believed is that any program success rests entirely with the teacher. For example, at School “X” when I was there, the school had about 850 students and there were 600 taking drama because the drama teacher was amazing. If you have a good teacher, you can have a good program in a tent—it’s not about resources or the room, it’s about the teacher.

The key to any school is staffing, and that is getting increasingly difficult with the whole seniority thing, but when you could choose your staff you could really create the school.

Hiring good teachers and setting up a variety of programs was a direct outgrowth of Principal B’s philosophy. She stated:

My personal philosophy is that everything you do has to be for the kids. That’s always been the way I think. I’ll give you an example. We had art, band, and choir and then every year we would have the school talent night and every year we had all these people come forward who were actors, and I said we have to have a program for these kids. So we created the drama wing and a really good facility for them and the other arts teachers were upset and said, ‘You’ll steal kids from our programs,’ and I said, ‘No, we want to reach other kids who haven’t got a program for their strengths right now.’ We created that drama program and, sure enough, students who weren’t taking any courses in band or art or choir signed up and we didn’t steal from those other programs.

Initial study of the nature of the school’s identification as exemplary indicated that it was the variety of programs meeting student needs and the growing involvement of teachers that contributed to the school’s exemplary status. From this perspective it
appeared that the fine arts program had little to do with the school’s reform; however, both teachers and administrators felt very differently. Principal D, who took up his tenure in September 1999 and had been a vice-principal during the initial stages of the reform, was decisive in his views on the subject.

Sure, the fine arts program contributed to the school’s exemplary status. If you believe that fine arts are an integral component in education, then it is important that we provide that opportunity. School has to provide equitable opportunities for all students, so the fine arts program was a component of the package. There were a number of factors. Seven years ago we realized we had an eclectic school population. A single stream wouldn’t meet the needs of our students and we had to break down the largeness of the big building. All the programs like FLEX, SPECTRUM, SUNRISE, TUMANOS came out of this realization but all ‘schools’ had access to the fine arts. In some respects, all of those students funnel through the fine arts program. The fine arts program provides the glue that holds all those programs together.

Principal B, who was the driving force behind the development of the schools-within-a-school model, did not feel that art was an integral component of the school’s reform. She appeared to feel differently when she spoke about the choir and the band, however, and she was effusive in her praise of the importance of those programs within the school.

The choir program is awesome. The choir teacher always has the largest teaching load in the school. You know the average teaching load is about 180 and, I hate to say this, but the choir typically has about 300. He has been there
forever but he is just incredible. Everybody who is in choir just gets sucked in.

Oh absolutely, the choir helps to unify the whole school – he takes kids who
know nothing about music or choir and turns them into soloists. I used to sit in
on his class just for fun. I’ve been in that class so many times just because I
wanted to go. He’s been like that forever.

Principal B was equally positive about the band program and its importance in the
school. She said, “Oh, the band is awesome and it has been for years and years. They
win all sorts of gold medals. The band teachers are just excellent.” Principal B’s less
than positive comments about art were restricted to visual art and not to the fine arts
program in its entirety. She went on to add:

The art teachers weren’t happy with me — one of the first things we did was
we scrapped 3 locally developed compulsory art courses for the senior grades.
They were locally developed but they were compulsory. We thought that gave
students three free blocks of time to choose things they wanted to do, and they
didn’t necessarily choose art courses – that wasn’t what they wanted.

Teacher 1 made comments that corroborated Principal B’s assessment of her
unpopularity amongst the art teachers. Teacher 1 commented that, “she [Principal B]
pulled away from art. That was a darker period because she was highly critical. It was
a real ‘dark ages’ for art.” Conversely, the band and choir teacher’s comments about
the same person were highly complimentary. The choir teacher (Teacher 2) said, “she
really supported the program – she came in many times to really be here. She liked
seeing the kids on task – that was her big thing, that the kids were on task and
learning.” The band teacher (Teacher 3) was equally positive in his assessment that he
had always had supportive administrators since he began teaching at the school in 1982 and that the principal from 1990 – 95 [Principal B] was no different. Several teachers mentioned the fact that, although Principal B was a “real pusher,” other school administrators and teacher leaders also helped to create the model that the school adopted.

From a different perspective there appears to be a strong feeling amongst the whole of the current administration that the fine arts program fits incredibly well with the model that the school has adopted because the fine arts teachers are so willing to provide education for all students. According to Vice-principal F:

The arts program depends so heavily on teachers and the teachers in our program are the most open staff. They’ll take kids in and it happens across the board. Take the choir teacher – he brings in huge groups of kids and, according to him, they’re all great kids. You ask him about his classes and it’s always the same, ‘they’re all great kids.’

A Picture of an Exemplary School in Progress

When asked about the process of getting included in the exemplary schools project, Principal B said:

Let me see, well, a notice came around in the Superintendent’s Bulletin ... perhaps the last day in June, and they were calling for applications for schools who were interested in being studied. I knew we were going into accreditation and I think that people should stand up and be counted. I also knew that we had this incredibly long list of initiatives that we had undergone in a two-year period. We had, perhaps, gone through four times as many changes as the
average school goes through in that amount of time. And so a representative of the CEA came out to the school, and then the whole research team came out and spent all this time in the school, and I thought it was pretty incredible that they even came to investigate us.

Principal B, who had already alluded to decreasing the dropout rate and increasing exam results, then went on to suggest other reasons why she felt that the school had reached a point where it could be considered exemplary.

It's very seldom that you can go in and say we gotta move this school into the twentieth century before we hit the 21st century. For the most part it has a really strong teaching staff and great kids and good resources. We set up a scholarship fund and so the school has money in perpetuity. It [the scholarship fund] was the best in the city. The school had great potential, but the problem was nobody was working with anybody. I strongly believe in this day-and-age it is not useful to work alone. You need strong departments. It was a great school that was sitting in a puddle and not doing anything. I got into a whole lot of trouble with some of the staff. My stance was everything we do is for the kids and some of the teachers would complain that I wasn’t paying any attention to the teachers, but I figure that without the kids, the teachers wouldn’t have jobs anyway.

In the eyes of Principal B, the school deserved consideration as an exemplary school because it had changed dramatically so that it met the needs of the students. Retention rates had improved, scores on provincial exams were up, staff was showing
more leadership initiative, and a variety of programs was meeting the needs of many students.

Thus, the 1993-1994 Internal Assessment Report for Accreditation combined with the 1995 Technical Report for the Exemplary Schools Project created a different picture of the school than the 1979 Report of the External Evaluation Team. The Technical Report indicated that the "turnaround, is in mid-process and aimed toward varied and ambitious goals" (Kelly, 1995, p. 9).

The Technical Report began with comments about the school's size and history. The researchers of the technical report appeared almost disconcerted by the size of the school.

Stories of rooms lost and rediscovered impress upon the newcomer just how big the concrete, multi-story building is: the gross area of the school's permanent plant is 30,428 square meters, 1.4 times bigger than the next-largest secondary school in the city, and situated on over 9 hectares (22.5 acres) of land. Its sheer physical size explains one of the school's nicknames, the 'Great Big School' (Kelly, 1995, p. x).

The Technical Report of the Exemplary Schools Project pointed to the creation of the schools-within-a-school model as being a strategy for "breaking up the great big school" (Kelly, 1995, p. x). The schools-within-a-school approach had its own challenges, however, and these were detailed in the report.

Although there is little doubt that these smaller communities within the school provide positive experiences for the students, parents and teachers directly involved, some parents, staff, and community members have voiced concern
that these experiences are available only to a select group of students (Kelly, 1995, p. 15).

One School Board trustee, who was quoted in the 1995 Report of the Exemplary Schools Project, voiced a concern about the approach.

Public school is what makes community possible. And if you create a secondary school in which kids are hived off into these atomistic, independent or semi-independent programs or streams of sorts, then you erode the capacity of the school to promote community. That is, the public school is the only institution where kids come together in conversation about issues.... If you don’t learn it there, you are not going to learn it anywhere else (Kelly, p. 15).

The 1995 Report of the Exemplary Schools Project pointed out that some of this concern “is partially offset at the school by the provision of school-wide activities and clubs open to all students” (Kelly, p. 16). Another concern with the schools-within-a-school approach was that, while it contributed to the school’s ability to meet an array of student needs, it also created the potential risk of highlighting the differences between students.

While meeting student needs was one of the rationales for “breaking up the ‘Great Big School’ into mini-schools and special programs” it also “multiplied opportunities for leadership, which, under the right conditions, can lead to sustained, positive change” (Kelly, 1995, p. 16). Principal B was convinced that school-wide leadership was important. Principal B also indicated that change needed to be from the ground up because “nothing imposed works,” and that she encouraged change by “pouring resources into the movers and shakers” and by working administratively to
"create an environment that invites initiative-takers to step forward" (Kelly, 1995, p. 17). There was a firm belief on the part of the school’s administration that, “initiating new programs, was simply the first step. Sustaining them – particularly those that diverged from the mainstream – also required leadership” (Kelly, 1995, p. 17).

The 1993-1994 Internal Assessment Report for Accreditation indicated that the school was in the process of change but had not arrived yet. In the final comments of the report, the Internal Assessment Committee wrote:

We have a picture of a school strongly discharging its traditional role of teaching the traditional curriculum. At the same time, there is an awareness of the enormous flux and change in culture, demographics, employment, and lifestyle, and a strong feeling that we have not been able to innovatively address those new challenges as we would like to. The hindrances to meeting these challenges include, a lack of flexibility due in part to lack of funding (which curtails innovative approaches to new problems), a failure to adequately communicate the nature of changing conditions in society to students and parents, and indeed, the fact that the changes in some areas are so overwhelming that we as educators may not have caught up to them (p. 51).

The Internal Assessment committee also commented on a concern that a “lack of planning and development time for development and innovation” was resulting in “the deterioration of innovative programs which were initiated previously” (p. 51).

Although the summative comments of the 1993-94 Internal Assessment Report for Accreditation suggest that there was still room for improvement, the goal statements for school accreditation exemplified a school that was concerned with
meaningful educational opportunities for its students. The report noted there were many goals that focused on "enhancing student learning" and "more actively involving parents and the community as partners in enhancing student learning." The staff development summary includes the goal, "to develop a cohesive, long term staff development plan which ensures our commitment to keeping our courses and professional practices current and relevant to the needs of our students" (p. 28). The planning and curriculum summary of the 1993 94 Internal Assessment Report for Accreditation included the goal “to develop productive cooperative processes to ensure that change is planned, coherent and results in enhanced student learning” (p. 32). The Leadership and Administration summary of the report included the goal that “the administrative team encourages staff to set and articulate goals” (p. 55). Because these were identified as goals, the staff spent time considering what would have to change in the school for the goals to be met, and the 1993 94 Internal Assessment Report for Accreditation indicated ongoing effort to attain what had been identified as important.

The report pointed to some friction regarding teacher leadership because it indicated that “some teachers believe that the administrative team should assume more leadership” (p. 62). A comment several pages later, however, noted that “some teachers have commented that there does not appear to be equal access to the leadership roles available” (p. 65). This comment immediately preceded the concern that “we have committees coming out of our ears. There is too much at times – I just want to teach” (p. 65). The Leadership and Administration committee report alluded to the friction, noting that “these comments, at times indicated strong feelings on
issues from various members of staff. Sometimes these comments were contradictory; sometimes they suggested that perception and reality were muddied” (p. 66).

Nevertheless, a report that highlighted friction between teachers who wanted more leadership opportunities with teachers who wanted reduced leadership expectations indicated that this was a school where teacher leadership was on the agenda.

As part of the Learning Experiences section of the 1993 94 Internal Assessment Report for Accreditation the internal review committee assessed whether or not “students were developing an appreciation of the Fine Arts.” On a survey distributed to the school community, 78% of the respondents felt that this was happening. The report cites several pieces of supporting evidence to show that students were developing an appreciation of the fine arts. Supporting evidence in the report noted that students:

- Use visual materials in many of their classes.

- Take classes which allow them to use creative thought.

- Take at least one senior level fine arts class.

- Are involved in art department field trips (theatres, galleries).

- Are exposed to the fine arts in their academic subjects.

- Are involved in fine arts extra-curricular activities.

- Take choir and band as part of their schedule.

- Participate in the City High School Drama Festival.

- Value their fine arts courses as much as their academic courses.

- Have access to many fine arts materials (books, supplies) (p. 41).
While the fine arts focus was one of 48 areas that were studied, its inclusion showed that the school had a long-standing consideration of the fine arts as an important area of learning for students. Although the fine arts program was a focus of the report, fine arts teachers were not convinced that their program was good enough. The committee’s comments on this area were enlightening because they suggested that some teachers in the school did not rate their programs as highly as they were rated by the rest of the school. The report noted that:

Interestingly, in two of these areas the staff as a whole gave high marks, but those involved in ESL and Fine Arts departments did not. ... The second area was in the area of Fine Arts, where teachers directly involved believe that there is still a long way to go to satisfactorily meet goals of education in the fine arts (p. 49).

The School In 1999

The 1999 – 2000 Course Planning Guide for the school described the courses and programs available in the school. Six years after the 93 94 Internal Assessment Report for Accreditation indicated a concern over “the deterioration of innovative programs which were initiated previously” (p. 51), the school still offered a broad range of alternative approaches to traditional education. In addition to a diverse array of traditional high school courses, the Course Planning Guide lists 8 Special Programs, a diverse Career Preparation Program with courses from Cook Training to Hairdressing, and an Apprenticeship Program. Programs like TUMANOS, SPECTRUM, SUNRISE, FLEX, and LINKS also remained a vital part of the school
program. Consequently, in 1999 offering a variety of programs to meet many student needs was still a focus of school programming.

In 1999, provincial exam results were right in line with the district average. For example, in chemistry, the school was considerably above the district average. School dropout rates were low even though the school was identified in a *June 1999 Transitions Report* as “one of the cities largest inner city schools” (p. 62).

Nevertheless, in addition to commendable student achievement, the *Transitions Report* also highlighted 5 special initiatives undertaken at the school to meet the needs of at-risk students. These initiatives were the alternate programs the school offered.

Although the school was in the media during the fall of 1999 because of a perceived racial problem, the majority of the staff in the building believed that the “school was being held hostage by a community association.” As Vice-principal G remarked in November of 1999, “there have only been two fights this fall, and neither of them were serious.” The school police officer commented, “this is my third year here, and I love it.” Teacher 4 described the racial situation at the school when she voiced the opinion that:

Kids have always hated each other – it’s got nothing to do with the colour of their skin but here everyone is a minority so they all know how it feels and it is a different sort of thing. I mean; there are so many of them they really don’t know who to hate. When I taught on the West Side, I saw worse racism occurring among the privileged students than I ever see here.

In contrast, Teacher 6 commented that she perceived that there were real issues to which the cultural group was reacting, but that she felt that way because of what she
had observed during a particular community involvement and not from what she had observed at school. She also indicated that her observations led her to believe that the cultural group in question exhibited behaviors that may have caused the negative reactions they were experiencing. Thus, it is possible that they had brought some of the problems on themselves.

A substitute art teacher reflected on her positive experience at the school as a student teacher and on her view of the school from the perspective of a substitute teacher. She observed that:

Ten years ago it [this school] was a scary place – at least that was its reputation at the school where I was a student – but now it’s accessible here. As a sub, I’ve been in other schools and the doors are closed. We use the best supplies here but there aren’t enough, so we have to dole them out, which is a shame. The students here want to learn. The art rooms are available at lunch and after school. It’s just accessible in a way that it’s not elsewhere. I love coming here.

In 1998/99, the school graduates were surveyed and the results show that the majority of school graduates believed that the school was a good place for students to learn. Of the 1998/99 graduates surveyed, 84% responded that they were proud to say they had attended the school and 78% felt that “successful achievements in academics, athletics, the fine arts, etc.... were recognized.”

The school in 1999 was clearly a school that had reached many of its reform goals and that had continued to strive towards attaining its remaining goals. Increased student achievement remained a focus and successful provincial test results supported
this emphasis. The school continued to offer a wide variety of programs to meet student needs. In addition to the varied program, the school was seen as being accessible and welcoming.

School Leadership

The practice of effective leadership has been noted as a key element of reform in the literature (Bell, 1993; Fullen & Miles, 1992; Longley, 1999; Schmoker, 1996). Because this school had undergone a successful reform, looking at leadership issues was valuable. Administrative leadership as it engendered teacher leadership and as it was perceived through the eyes of teachers, said a great deal about leadership philosophy. Teacher leadership as it was enacted and as it was perceived was indicative of both administrative approach and leadership in the school.

Administrator Views of Teacher Leadership

Past principals, the current principal and vice-principals had strong views on teacher leadership. Principal B indicated that in her view, “Everyone in the school should be involved in leadership – everyone should have a role. Teachers should all be included in decision making about their programs and they should be actively involved.” The current operating model of the school was, therefore, built on the expectation that everyone should be involved in leadership, and it is clear that this philosophy persists. Principal D voiced the belief that:

For me it is teachers being professionals. I believe in transformational leadership. Transformational leadership should transfer into the class, but students should be fully engaged. This is especially true in the arts; it’s true in
all disciplines, but especially in the arts. The teacher has to be a role model not only through delivery but also through his or her own activities as an artist.

All three vice-principals at the school also voiced clear expectations for teacher leadership. Vice-principal F explained:

Teacher leadership is essential for a successful program but also essential in terms of providing direction for the school. For instance, input to administration in terms of decision making is vital. Strong teacher leadership demonstrates ownership of programs. So much energy and commitment goes into making a strong program. Strong teacher commitment builds a strong reputation and a strong program and that is going to attract students.

School administration also spoke of ways to support teachers in taking on leadership roles within the school. Vice-principal G provided an example of the kind of support that she viewed as a valuable means of encouraging teacher leadership.

Right now I'm working with a teacher who has an idea with former ESL kids who have been pulled from the ESL programs that we used to have because those programs have been cut. My response has been to say, 'Why don't you put together some action research to see what is really happening.' I try to encourage teachers to share with each other. We have some brilliant teachers on staff, so getting that sort of thing going is really exciting.

Administrative support, as an important aspect of encouraging teacher leadership, was expressed repeatedly. Vice-principal E expressed her views on teacher leadership when she observed:
My sense of a strong school is that it should be a place where any teacher who has an idea they want to pursue should be supported in doing so. Teachers should be encouraged to do things and they should be supported with their ideas.

Vice-principal F also stressed the idea of support for teacher involvement in program development by explaining that “I’m most excited when teachers come to me with an idea about their program, and I can support it. When someone has an exciting idea for a program and I can help them to get it going, that’s the most exciting.” Vice-principal G suggested that “at this school there is incredible support for initiative – I mean, within some sort of set parameters, but there is a great deal of support for ideas.”

When administrators were asked about their goals for the school, the belief in strong teacher leadership came up again. Vice-principal F said, “This should be a place with strong teachers and a place where everyone takes leadership roles.” Vice-principal E indicated a similar sentiment when she said, “My goal is to have a really participatory system with students and teachers involved in school governance in meaningful ways.” Or, as Principal C avowed:

I think that instructional leadership comes in a variety of ways. It comes about when colleagues are able to talk with one another. It means that someone, and I don’t mean the principal (it can be anyone – an administrator, another teacher, etc.), but someone provides the energy to make learning possible and exciting and gets talking happening.
A measure of Principal D's commitment to teacher leadership was evident in a comment that also showed his understanding of how to encourage leadership behaviors. He explained:

Teachers are professionals and need to be seen as professionals. But people don't take ownership without responsibility – they need to be trusted. Thus, arts teachers would be included in staffing decisions, resource decisions and, of course, in making decisions about and designing their programs and classrooms.

Vice-principal F echoed this view when he indicated that "obviously it is important to include the fine arts teachers in decision making. You really can't make decisions without discussion with them and input from them (that is true with any teacher and any program)."

Teacher Leadership in the Arts

There was evidence of teacher leadership throughout the fine arts department and some indication that this leadership had been instrumental in building and maintaining the arts program in the school. The school had chosen to introduce the grade eight students to the fine arts program by splitting the grade eight year into ten-week segments. This allowed students to complete modules in each fine arts discipline, thereby providing exposure to each of the subjects in the fine arts department. In response to the fact that the grade eight students spent only ten weeks in each fine arts discipline, Teacher 2 said, "My aim here is to get them back again next year." This was apparently accomplished by providing a ten-week experience
that gave students a realistic understanding of the program and a sense of accomplishment.

There were numerous references to approaches that could help to build the program in each of the disciplines. Teachers spoke of information sent home to keep parents informed and to let them know of student achievement in arts classes. When appropriate, this communication was in the form of achievement certificates. Teacher leadership was also apparent in the approach that individual fine arts teachers took towards scheduling. For instance, in addition to the accessible choir schedule, enthusiastic drama students were allowed into drama classes outside of their grade so that the continuity of their program in drama was maintained. Art was often scheduled in split classes, which made more work for the art teachers but accommodated scheduling issues for students. Band had a team-teaching component, which allowed for a large band and provided a greater opportunity for band students. Choir was scheduled so students had as many options as possible. In addition, all of the teachers made themselves available when students needed to see them.

The department head's involvement in a district-wide Fine Arts Leadership Group provided further evidence of leadership. The group sought to address "some of the issues and concerns surrounding the arts in VSB schools" (Fine Arts Leadership Group meeting minutes). Thus, the department head's participation meant that the fine arts department was kept aware of district initiatives and gave the fine arts department head bargaining clout in her own school should she need it.
The department head, who did view herself as a teacher leader, indicated that there were often other more pressing concerns that took away from the time she could devote to being a leader:

As teacher leader – if I had new teachers in my department then I’d be more concerned with instructional leadership. The truth of the matter is that my department is extremely isolated. When we have a meeting, we all just want to talk. We are unique because we are so diversified. It was my suggestion that we become arts of the east [east side arts magnet school]. I can’t really be a leader in band because I don’t really know what they are doing. So, how can I help people? There isn’t much opportunity to take on a leadership role. When do we have time for this, for doing this leadership stuff? How am I supposed to do anything that either supports another teacher or helps another teacher? By my age, you can tell I’ve been at it longer. But what is the forum? What is the vehicle? The only experience I use is to chair meetings and what a waste that is. To give training, that is a form of leadership. It’s like saying, ‘I’m going to save you all the time to figure it all out.’

In contrast to her own appraisal of the role she was able to play, department members frequently referred to her leadership suggesting that she did a good job so that they did not need to worry about leadership issues. As Teacher 3 said, “When I have problems, I let my teacher leader, (Teacher 4), take care of them.”

Observation revealed consistent proactive leadership behaviors on the part of all teachers in the fine arts department. Teacher 2’s initial comment, however, encapsulated the general feeling amongst the fine arts teachers. When asked
specifically about his views on instructional leadership the response was, "Oh I’m not really into that sort of thing – I just do what I do and I’m involved here [pointed around room]. Well, yes, I do what I do to keep my program strong but…." This teacher exhibited strong leadership behaviors on a regular basis but did not view what he did as "leadership"; it was just "doing what I do." Teacher 6 highlighted the "doing what I do" position in a way that also clarified the attitudes of many of her colleagues. After some thought, she expressed the view that:

Teachers are trained in the way that they’re trained and they don’t want to change. They get working and they don’t see outside and they get good at doing what they’re doing. But we have to be aware of what is happening in the rest of the world and try to get on the bandwagon.

Teacher 5’s response to questions about his views on leadership indicated that he viewed leadership as being important but not part of his daily experience in the classroom. He commented:

Ooooohhhhh, one of those “educational” words. How do I answer this one? [long pause] Trying to provide number one, a physical environment that allows or enhances people to do their job. People need to know that there is support and guidance. I think it is also holding people accountable, which doesn’t always happen in education. Leadership means that you will also rock the boat when it is needed.

In contrast with their perceptions that what they did on a daily basis did not necessarily involve leadership, these teachers readily gave examples of the importance of leadership when asked whether instructional leadership was significant in building a
strong arts program. For instance, one band teacher commented, “From the band perspective leadership really is important. Who is directing affects the program. The program really is the director. Great coach pretty good team – lousy coach pretty bad team.” Or as Teacher 5 suggested, “Although resources and facilities have to be there, programs will run themselves if you have the right people. Get the right people and then let them do the job.” When asked whether or not instructional leadership was important, Teacher 6 responded with an emphatic “oh, Dough! Through personal experience I can say definitely, absolutely, undoubtedly, etc.” The arts teachers frequently exhibited leadership behaviors and also believed that leadership was important in building a strong program but, when asked about leadership, did not view what they did as being leadership. When asked, however, what they did personally to strengthen their programs, they were both willing and able to talk at length about initiatives they had undertaken.

Teachers tended to view leadership as something apart from their jobs and, when the subject of leadership came up, referred to their department head or to some other “person” apart from themselves. As Teacher 6 pointed out:

An instructional leader would be an experienced teacher who informs younger teachers of the ‘ropes.’ It is someone open to questions about department and school policy. That person should be informed and make an effort to keep other individuals in the department informed of policy and administrative decisions which affect the department and the curriculum. They must demonstrate good communication skills and act as a liaison and a resource for
others in the department. They must be somewhat selfless but be strong enough to model limits, in short, superhuman.

Five years after Principal B had declared that, "everyone in the school should be involved in leadership – everyone should have a role," teachers still did not perceive themselves to be leaders.

When teachers were asked how problems in the fine arts program were dealt with, however, they began talking about leadership a great deal more. Several made comments similar to the remark that, "I don't have too many problems. Basically _______ is the leader of the arts program... so if there is a problem... but really there aren't problems." Teacher 5 raised the issue of leadership in the context of problem solving in the department. He indicated that:

The arts are unique in that we're all our own bosses. We're all leaders in our own areas. Working with a colleague (because there are two of us teaching drama)—having common vision and goals. The curriculum in drama is so wide open that it is important to discuss what you are doing and when you are going to do it at what grade levels.

Teacher 1 echoed the belief that the fine arts teachers ran their own shows and, in that respect, were involved in personal leadership. She observed that "each one of us is our own leader. Leadership is really important in building a strong arts program. Every single art teacher is a leader and good at communication. Then you can build something greater than yourself."
Administrative Support for Teacher Leadership

The level of teacher leadership apparent in the fine arts department spoke to the administration’s willingness to trust teachers to carry out individual initiatives. Teachers within the fine arts department appeared to feel comfortable designing and carrying out their own programs without apprehension of administrative interference. Teacher 3 suggested that “admin [is] really supportive.” When questioned about their degree of support for fine arts within the school, both past and present administrators echoed the fine arts teachers’ perceptions by indicating a strong degree of support for the program. Principal D said, “It is essential to have a strong arts program in the school. The arts breathe soul into the school and the school culture.” Vice-principal E phrased it differently with the comment that a strong arts program, “changes the whole tone and flavor of the school and provides opportunities for the students and broadens their educational experience.”

Administrative support went beyond support for leadership and extended to support for the whole fine arts program. Principals and vice-principals all indicated ways in which they tried to give their support to the fine arts program in the school. Several administrators pointed to the importance of being present at arts functions as a way to show support. Vice-principal G’s comments were indicative of administrative sentiment.

What do I do [to show support]? Well, I am present. I attend as many things as I can and then I go on the P.A. to promote arts things whenever possible. I’m going to Cuba with the Jazz ensemble this year, so I try to show my support by showing that I care and being there as much as possible.
Principal D talked about the importance of the arts and trying to communicate that to students as a way of supporting the arts program. He pointed to a number of practical ways that he could do that:

I’ll make sure it has appropriate funding and staff allocations so that the arts are not marginalized. I really believe that the arts are a part of the foundation courses in education. I view education in school as a liberal arts education for students. They need to be exposed and given opportunity.

Other administrators also pointed to the practical side of support for a program. Principal C said the best way he could support the fine arts program was to “influence decision making in terms of budget support.” Vice-principal F voiced the belief that “trying to give them [the arts teachers] the rooms that they need and supporting teacher initiative” were very tangible ways he could support the program.

Vice-principal E indicated that her own involvement in the arts as a singer was a way in which she could support the experience of students in the arts. As she explained:

One of the boys here goes to the same singing coach and I try to bring that out when I see him and keep the connection – compare notes. I work to compliment teachers and students on their accomplishments. I try to visit classes. I also think that drama is incredibly good at developing students in ways that will be with them their whole lives and I try to communicate that. If it were up to me, every kid would have drama.

Vice-principal G pointed to support as being an ongoing process when she remarked:
Normally I will raise the importance of the arts in assemblies, newsletters, at parent evenings, whenever possible. I also show support through attending and being in attendance, being a chairperson, whenever possible, at arts events. Then I can bring it up at meetings. You need to celebrate the arts and their accomplishments in the school, and you need to indicate often how important it is to emulate excellence in the arts.

Vice-principal E expressed the view that support for the fine arts program came out of her attitude towards the arts. She declared that she helped to ensure that the program was supported by “be[ing] present and valu[ing] the contribution of the arts in the school.” She further emphasized her point when she said, “attitude is really important and how I respond shows a lot.”

Principal C expressed the belief that administration should communicate support for the arts:

... in many ways and subtly. For instance, you give opportunities at staff meetings to publicize events and activities and to get more staff involved. I worked with parents to help fund raise for the arts programs. It’s also very important to celebrate the arts. For instance, one of the first things I did when I came to the school was to spend a fair bit of money to build the display cases at the entry to the school and to spend money on frames and that sort of thing. I really think that an administrative commitment to Fine Arts could make a difference. I couldn’t teach the arts but I think that they play an important role in our lives and school should support that. I’ve always looked for
opportunities to celebrate the arts. In my work in both elementary schools and high schools I have always worked to make that important.

Principal C was quick to itemize ways that he had been able to show his support for the arts program while he was at the school. He indicated that he showed support in several ways:

I guess partly in times of shrinking budgets to see that they had their share. So also an involvement with fund raising to make sure that they got their share.

For instance the band went to New Jersey and competed and this year they are also going somewhere. The drama people are also talking about going to New York and that is another area where you work to support the program by trying to get the best teachers. I had worked with that drama teacher at school Y and I jumped at the opportunity to get him into the school. You do that, you get a great teacher and the program really grows. Also, any opportunity to get out into the community strengthens program. So, people like Teacher 1 with her Stoltzman wilderness project, or the band going out to elementary schools or the choir going out into the community – all of that is important. If you make it possible for them to get out, it really supports the program. Did you know that the two music teachers were recently honored for their commitment to the community for 25 years?

Principal D echoed the belief that administrative support could make a difference and that it was an important focus because; “the arts should be seen as an essential component to a complete educational package.”
Teacher Perceptions of Administrative Support

Some teachers within the department voiced concerns about a lack of understanding of the educational importance of their programs. These concerns were not expressly addressed towards the administration within the school but did indicate an "us and them" sentiment. Overall, the fine arts teachers felt that their programs were supported although there were instances where they felt that what they did was not really understood, or that the politics of administration impinged on the support for the fine arts within the school. Teacher 2 amplified this concern when he observed that:

Every now and then somebody down there will get an idea. They're coming through and they want to do something -- make a name or something -- and they'll come up with some idea. Like one fellow really wanted to move the choir room down to that big barn of a room down there [pointed towards auditorium]. Can you imagine trying to have a choir down there? All echo-ee. Well, he just persisted and persisted and I resisted and resisted. Really, have you seen my storage room? [We went into narrow room that was lined with shelves for storage of music, guitars, wiring, and microphones.] And I have all the hanging mikes in here and the sound system, and can you imagine moving? It would be ludicrous! So he finally gave up. Why would I want to move?

This teacher, who had been at the school for 31 years, pointed out that it took years to build such a good facility for the choir and that "someone who had just come into the school didn't have a sense of the history and therefore was in no position to start changing things." The opinion was that an administrator who was not going to be
around in another five years should not try to change things. Vice-principal E also alluded to the disadvantages of frequent movement when she said, “I really want to be seen to encourage teachers but I have been handicapped, for want of a better term, by being moved every two and a half years. It makes it hard to really support.”

Teachers tended to believe that they received administrative support because they felt that they were consulted about important issues. As Teacher 5 explained:

By and large, yes we are consulted about decisions that will affect us. There is the odd omission where administration will forget or where they will assume something that isn’t quite right but really there is a high level of respect for the program and for most things we are consulted.

Teacher 6 also felt that the arts received administrative support but she had some reservations about the level of that support.

It is generally true that we are involved in decisions that will affect the program. I believe that the fine arts department is usually consulted about matters that affect the arts programs. However, occasionally the department members seem to be passed over. The role which art instructors have to play in computer graphics programs seems to be considered inconsequential. In the real world computers are becoming a tool for artists, but in this school art is a tool for those interested in computers. It diminishes the perceived value of our visual arts program. Evidence – the lack of computer technology available for our visual arts department.

Another view in the department was that, “if decisions come from above, we consult as a department. I think we do that a lot.” This view was reiterated by
Teacher 3 who indicated that, “we communicate well within the department.” Teacher 5 commented that within the department communication was possible because “we have a lot of trust” and that means “I don’t feel isolated at all.” One teacher felt, however, that the department was not consulted enough and said, “No, I don’t feel that we’re consulted. Why do I feel that way? It is a continual fight to get materials – everyone is that way but it should be much easier.” Teacher 1 confirmed this view when she recounted, “Generally speaking, yes, administration supports our program but that [support] doesn’t happen by resting on your laurels. You have to argue for what you believe.”

Teacher 1 also commented that the current principal was an advocate for the arts and would elicit teacher views before he made any decisions about the program. She felt that way because she had worked with Principal D when he was acting principal at the school in 1995 and “sat next to me at a meeting and was very supportive.” Teacher 4 referred to the fact that Principal D came to visit the art room within the first two weeks of school and appeared to care about the program.

Teacher 2 had an interesting view of administrative support. He implied that he could run his own program and really only needed administration for one thing. He said, “Yep, administration supports my program. I can always find the money I need – it’s just always there and I don’t have problems getting what I need.”

The Role of the Arts in Reform and in the School

Since the literature presented a picture of the necessary attributes of an arts program that was capable of playing a role in school reform (Boston, 1996; Cortines, 1997; Fowler, 1994; Longley, 1999; Martin, 1994; Oddleifson, 1992, 1994, 1996;
Welch, 1995), it was significant to study the nature of the program in the school. The relative prominence of the fine arts program within the whole school was an important consideration for study because as Burnham (1997) has asserted the arts must be studied for their own merit. For the purpose of this study it was meaningful to look at:

1) the availability of the fine arts courses within the school’s schedule
2) the participation of the student population in the fine arts program
3) the overall school goals in relation to the fine arts program
4) the perceived value of the arts program in the school.

Also, because of the assertion in the literature, that not just any program would result in the desired gains in student achievement (Boston, 1996; Burnham, 1997; Fowler, 1994; Oddleifson, 1992; Seidel, 1994), consideration of class routines, expectations of excellence, evaluation practices, teacher energy and arts facilities was important. Additionally, due to the often-cited lament that funding had the capacity to make or break a program (Darby & Catterall, 1994) it was worthwhile to look at funding issues in the arts at the site school. Funding was also worthy of consideration because teacher response to funding issues had the capacity to illuminate aspects of teacher leadership and teacher initiative. Finally, within the context of a deeper understanding of the arts program it was illuminating to study the perceptions of the teaching staff regarding the role that the arts program played in the school’s reform.

**Course Availability in the Exemplary Site School**

The courses offered by the Fine Arts department are explained in detail in the School Course Planning guide. Each description defined the prerequisites for the course, textbooks used in the course, the course or courses that naturally followed, and
a readable description of the aims of the course. The course selections were broad and there was something for almost every predilection. In total, from grades eight through twelve, the Fine Arts department offered 33 different courses.

In addition to the broad course offering in fine arts, teachers within the Fine Arts department strove to make their courses accessible within the timetable so that students were not restricted from taking a fine arts course due to scheduling concerns. The broad course offerings also provided students with the opportunity to take courses that were studio based as well as courses that were critique based. As a result, there were course options for a wide range of interests and abilities.

Teachers had also addressed the timetable and scheduling in creative ways to maximize the availability of their courses. For example, through the initiative of the choir teacher, choir was offered for grades nine through twelve in each class period. As Teacher 2 explained:

I put the 9, 10, 11, and 12 students all together as I find that I lose very few students with this arrangement e.g. A: gr. 9, B: gr. 10, C: gr. 11, D: gr. 12 – in this timetable a grade 12 student can only get into D block, but with – A: gr. 9 – 12, B: gr. 9 – 12, C: gr. 9 – 12, D: gr. 9 – 12 that student has four blocks to choose from and if his Biology 12 class is in D block he can still choose choir in A, B, or C blocks.

The drama teacher conducted a Theatre Criticism class that was “off the timetable” thereby affording accessibility to students who would not be able to fit it into their schedules during the school day. The drama teacher pointed out that “I also have a
whole mix [acting, stagecraft, directing and scriptwriting] all in one block at the senior level so that I can offer all these different courses."

The teachers readily concurred that they had administrative support for these initiatives thereby substantiating administrations’ belief that there was tremendous support for teacher initiative in the school. When discussing timetable issues the fine arts teachers indicated that a teacher in the school looked after the scheduling and that “he is really good at it. It suits our needs.” Teacher 5 commented, “I would say if there isn’t a good schedule, we’d make a noise.” There was some concern voiced by the art teachers that they had many split classes for which they did not always see a great need, however, when questioned further, they also conceded that the splits did give some students necessary options when choosing a timetable. Ultimately the Teacher 5’s comments about schedule sum up the overall attitude of the fine arts department, “I asked for it and I got it. What I ask I get.”

**Arts Participation in the Exemplary School**

Teachers in the fine arts program believed that it was necessary for them to take initiative in reaching students to keep their programs strong. There was an underlying belief that their classes were good for students so it was important to get them through the door. As Teacher 3 observed:

I make it really accessible. For example, I have lunch rehearsals and lots of performances in the community, at seniors’ homes, at elementary schools. The elementary schools are really important for raising the profile of the program. Those performances really bring students in.

Teacher 2 elaborated on the idea of accessibility when he commented that:
I make it as available as possible – the kids will come if they can get in. I get music from the students – I tell them, ‘If you give me the song I’ll figure it out for you.’ Usually if I just spend an hour or two, I’ve got it. I don’t think it is a copyright thing really – I’m not giving them the music and the words are easily available anyway. That way the kids’ll like the songs. I initially had a problem with getting boys in, but then one year, and I don’t know why, I had twenty boys and then we did performances and the other boys saw them and I’ve never had a problem since.

Accessibility was only one of the issues involved in program strength. The subject of authentic learning was also considered to be important.

I attempt to make the three dimensional work done by students authentic, we built luminaries [lanterns] last year, building Garden gargoyles this year, connections with the Trout Lake Wisdom Circle Project. I work to help students gain confidence in their ability with the three dimensional medium.

Teacher 5 had adopted several approaches to reach potential drama students and to make his program more meaningful for them. He explained:

Theatre crit. was important because it gave me the option to expand what I offered. Doing the one act plays and the festival. And winning awards at festival helps. The one act plays are good because they involve students and staff. We involve about 40 students by the time we have all-of-the backstage people etc. and that really profiles the program and the theatre concept. We have crew shirts etc. so it creates recognition and community.
It's always an issue of balancing it. Where, because it's an elective, the bottom line is that the kids have gotta like it. So that balance is a fine line because you have to have consistency and accountability and enjoyment.

**Fine Arts Participation in the Exemplary School**

The total school population in June 1999 was 1,800. June figures indicated that 1630 of the 1,800 students at the school had taken a Fine Arts course during the 1998/99 school year representing a 91% participation level. Because it was possible for individual students to enroll in more than one arts course during the year, adjustment of this number by one student per class created a more realistic picture of well over 80% of students enrolled in a fine arts course. The figures for the 1999/2000 school year indicated that the percentage of participation remained virtually the same. This high participation rate indicated that the mission statement goals regarding aesthetics were being addressed.

**The Relationship of School Goals and Fine Arts Goals at the Exemplary Site**

Reading the mission statement of the school provided the impression that the school valued the contribution of the fine arts in education. For example, the mission statement, included at the front of the 1998/99 School Student Handbook, indicated that developing the students' aesthetic potential was part of the mission of the school. One of the broad vision goals for students was to “strive to develop knowledge, and skills in critical and creative thinking, communication, problem solving, computer literacy and artistic appreciation.” Since both critical and creative thinking as well as the development of students' aesthetic potential were addressed by a strong fine arts
program, their inclusion in the mission statement indicated that the school community valued the learning that education in the fine arts provided.

During the spring of 1999, the school revised and refined its mission statement with the participation of teachers, parents and students. The new statement that arose from this school-wide initiative reflected a continuing commitment to developing students “intellectual, social, ethical, aesthetic, physical and emotional intelligences.” The newly crafted mission statement also listed, as one of its guiding principles, a commitment to “developing the diverse talents and gifts of all within the community.” Thus, the new mission statement for the school reflected an ongoing commitment to valuing the contribution of fine arts studies.

The student handbook for the 1999/2000 school year listed “developing the diverse talents and gifts of all within the community” as one of the school’s guiding principles, indicating that the fine arts program would be an integral component of the school’s diverse program. Although most of the teachers in the fine arts department believed that they considered the school goals when building their programs, individual understandings of what that meant varied greatly. Teacher 5 clearly articulated the importance of school goals in his program with the comment, “Yea, I try to bring in the ideas of equality by treating kids fairly and equally. I try to bring the goals of the school into the program so that the kids are both consciously and unconsciously aware of them. Goals permeate my program.” This clear articulation, however, contrasted with Teacher 1’s comments:

No, I don’t make my class goals fit the goals of the school at all. I like to think that the school creates its goals around me. No, I’ve never built my program to
fit the goals of the school – I couldn’t even tell you what the goals are. School goals have never shaped what I do.

While these two comments highlight the extremes within the department, the most common response to questions about school goals was “where I can, I try to make my program fit the goals of the school.” There was a certain element of acceptance when the goals happened to fit with the teacher’s personal philosophy and passive resistance when the goals were not understood or appeared to be in direct contrast to what the teacher believed. The comment, “I try to make my class goals fit the goals of the school where I can” clearly illustrates this view.

The Fine Arts Program’s Perceived Value at the Exemplary Site

School administrators, fine arts teachers and teachers in other programs expressed a high degree of support for the value of the fine arts program in the whole school. As Vice-principal F commented, the fine arts program was important because, “it changes the whole tone and flavor of the school and provides opportunities for the students and broadens their educational experience.” Vice-principal E expressed the view that it was “very” important to have a strong arts program in the school because: the arts allow everyone to develop another part of themselves and allow people to display talents. Studying the arts in school allows students to develop that dimension that can’t be developed through other things. This is really important because most of all the arts are enduring. You don’t hear of someone getting involved in a science or a math performance years after school, but the arts remain a part of an individual’s life and we should help the students develop that.
Principal D was succinct in his appraisal of the importance of having a strong arts program in the school. He said, “It is essential. The arts breathe soul into the school and the school culture.”

The fine arts teachers, although not as certain that the whole school valued their program as much as they did, were tentatively optimistic about the perceived value of the fine arts program in the school. As Teacher 3 mused:

I am not sure how much we [the fine arts] are valued in the school. Well the rest of the school, all the other departments, are all really busy and just focused on what they are doing, and I don’t know if they think about the arts.

Everybody is just busy doing their own thing.

Teacher 4 indicated that it was hard to judge how the rest of the school perceived the value of the fine arts. She said:

How would I know whether they value us? Definitely teachers stop when we are putting a show in the showcase and individual teachers speak to me. What are the indicators that I would need to know that the program is appreciated?

I’m not sure. I mean, people like the art and they are supportive that way. The program is definitely not put down.

Other fine arts teachers were slightly more confident about the program’s perceived importance in the rest of the school. Their comments reflected the belief that most people in the school valued the fine arts program. Teacher 1 responded that “yes, the fine arts program is valued in the school. We are a very strong department and very respected. We get lots of positive feedback.” She went on to question whether or not being valued was enough because she wondered, “Is the program understood by
everybody? Not necessarily. But that's probably the problem of the arts anyway. People like the art we put up, but don’t really understand the process we go through to get there.”

Arts teachers’ responses to whether or not their program was valued appeared to reflect their disciplines. Teachers of the performing arts got more feedback from concerts and were very positive that they had an important place in the school. For instance, Teacher 2, the choir teacher, responded “yeah the arts program is valued! We do a Christmas assembly and usually Teacher 5 is the M.C. and we have all sorts of things happening and we sing and the kids all sing along.” Teacher 4, an art teacher, was more cautious and mused “I believe it is valued by most. I feel this way from feedback that I get – especially from students because they want to take arts courses.”

Other teachers in the school expressed strong feelings about the value of the fine arts program. One teacher said, “I think the art is really important in our school and it reaches a lot of the kids but it’s not promoted enough, you know what I mean.” This teacher expounded on his views by suggesting that what the students did in fine arts they “took with them for life” as opposed to many “school subjects” that were very school bound. In contrast with the actual participation rate, this teacher’s perception was that “I think that lots of the kids would take more arts if they could, but they can’t fit it in, and that’s a shame.” It was also clear that part of what impressed the school staff was the quality of the work that students were doing in the fine arts program. As one teacher said, “I’m always impressed by what I see in the showcase. I’d buy it.” Another staff member suggested that the quality of the work the students
in the fine arts were producing was one of the reasons why the arts were important in
the school. She said, "I do feel that the fine arts program has an impact on the rest of
the school because the kids are proud of their achievements and excited to be a part of
the band and the theatre." One teacher thought deeply about the impact of the fine arts
program and then responded carefully, "The fine arts program has an impact in the
development of the entire person, but in terms of specific effects as seen in my science
and senior Biology courses, no, I don't think that the fine arts program has an
impact." Despite the one less than glowing commendation, the staff at the school
generally felt that the fine arts program did have a positive influence on the school.
One teacher's comments encapsulated staff sentiment well:

The fine arts department has a tremendous impact on the rest of the school.

First, the one-act plays, Christmas concerts, festivals, art displays in the school,
and the public performances on CBC all add to the prestige of a school often
unjustly attacked in the press. Second, these courses are seen as positives for
students aiming for lifetime learning.

School staff who had queries about the nature of the research were willing to respond
with accolades for their fine arts program without being pushed. Perhaps the most
striking thing about staff response was the high degree of ownership for the fine arts
program displayed by all within the building. This was striking because it suggested a
school culture that not only valued the contribution of the fine arts program but also
considered the program's strength as a plus for the whole school.
Class Routines in the Arts Program

Observation occurred late in September, in mid October, and in early November 1999 and from the observations it was apparent that students had internalized clear and effective expectations for routines in each course. It was also apparent early in the year that teachers made the internalization of their expectations for routines a priority in each class. In addition, frequent references to overarching objectives were an obvious feature. Classes typically began smoothly with little direction from the teacher indicating that students knew and understood expected class behaviors. For example, a grade-eight choir class came into the room at the start of the period and chatted boisterously until the teacher hit a chord on the piano. The class immediately came to attention and within minutes were standing and singing warm-up scales without a single word from the teacher. In band, the students were in their places and warming up before the teacher came into the room. They were ready to play immediately when the teacher lifted his hands to conduct. The drama teacher merely said, “I’ll give you a few minutes just to get focussed and we’ll do this in the same routine as before.” After this direction, the students went right to work and obviously knew what was expected. Art classes started smoothly as well with students at their desks with materials out and ready often before the bell to start class had rung.

Effective and efficient routines were also evident during class wrap-up as well. At the end of the day chairs went up in the art rooms without verbal direction from the teacher. In choir, the sound equipment was put away by students in an efficient manner with little direction from the teacher, and in drama the students restored classroom order as if it was a practiced routine to do so. The efficient carrying out of
class routines in this way allowed for smooth operation of classes and a focus on learning that was unhindered by wasting time on mechanical operations.

Teachers in all classes frequently used appropriate technical terminology with the result that students were learning to think and act like artists. Involving the students in real-world arts behaviors rather than watered-down school activities was clearly an objective of the fine arts teachers. A good example of this approach occurred in a senior drama class where the students came into the room to do a dialogue following a mock audition routine. The drama teacher said, “I’ll be the casting director for this, so decide how you will introduce yourself, come in, find your mark, and go.” The students took turns videotaping each other and then critiqued the video at the end of class. After listening to the teacher’s insightful comments it was clear that the students could go to an audition and, if nothing else, have confidence that they knew what was expected of them. Teacher 5 explained, “With an active film industry in the city, it is important for the students to learn this stuff.” Closely related to this was a desire to help the students make connections between their lives and their fine arts study. Teacher comments like, “That’s a skill we use everyday in real life, isn’t it?” showed this focus. In band the students were directed to be “in concert dress” for an evening performance and no further explanation was required for the teacher to ensure that the students would be appropriately attired. Teacher 6 commented that she tried to make her students’ experience “as authentic as possible” and gave examples of projects that students could connect with what was happening in the city around them.
Ultimately, it was apparent that there was a clear desire not only to involve students in activity that each teacher considered valuable, but also to help students recognize the relevancy of their fine arts study in their own lives. In addition, student involvement and engagement indicated that study in the fine arts at the school was felt to be valuable by its constituents.

**Expectations of Excellence in the Arts Program**

A defining characteristic of the fine arts program at the school was the continual striving for excellence that occurred in each classroom. Art students readily accepted comments like, “we never let things go at fine – we’ve gotta be brilliant.” This showed the belief that excellence was not only an expectation but also an achievable goal. This expectation of excellence was also clearly evident in band where student reaction to the directive, “OK, let’s do it ten times – just that part,” was to set to work promptly. It was clear to students that their teachers believed they were capable of excellence and worth the effort to help them achieve it.

The expectation of excellence was also evident in student effort and production. One art student arrived with a project on which he had spent hours over the weekend because he was concerned that his first effort had not been up to standard. A music student took time out of his schedule to give a guided tour of the school. His pride in the whole fine arts program was a salient feature in his comments. Students in a grade-eight choir class wanted to continue singing right to the end of class. When they were told to pack up, one student said, “No, let’s do more songs. We’ve got time.” Coming as it did at the end of the last class of the day, this comment was significant. A fire drill occurring in the midst of another choir class was welcomed.
with groans and the comment, "Why do we have to have a fire drill during Choir? Why couldn’t it be another class?"

Teacher 5 summed up the ethos of the department the observation that "Setting high standards is really important so the course doesn’t become a dumping ground. Setting expectations and following through is what makes the whole thing work."

**Evaluation Practices in the Arts Program**

The expectation of excellence was reflected in the evaluation practices evident in each classroom as well. As Teacher 6 explained, "Evaluation should encourage students to take the study of art as a serious discipline, to take pride in their art work, and to value the process of creativity." Students appeared to be both comfortable with evaluation and well informed. Student discussions with teachers regarding their work were observed in several classrooms and in each case the discussions were honest and fair. Student work was held to a high standard, but feedback was non-threatening and clear. Teachers displayed integrity in their willingness to offer honest and demanding critiques of student work. Students appeared to know that feedback would be rigorous but fair and constructive. This resulted in relationships of respect between students and teachers. From the feedback they received, students obviously understood where they needed to improve and how to go about doing it. While each teacher had his or her own system for informing students of their progress, it was clear that students understood the procedures used. Band students went to a bulletin board to check posted marks. In another class, the teacher visited each student in turn to update him or her on progress, while in other classes students came to the teacher to check their
marks which were up to date and accessible. It was evident that teachers not only saw evaluation as an important component of their programs but also were not afraid to push students. Teacher 6 observed, “I don’t like to rag on them, but I don’t like to see them fail, so I run around bugging them about missed assignments.”

Evaluation practices also highlighted another important aspect of a strong fine arts program in that evaluation was, for the most part, designed to help students be critically reflective. Senior drama students videotaped themselves and then, as a class, watched the tape and critiqued themselves and their classmates. It was obvious that the class had built a climate of trust and that the critique was understood as a means of achieving better work. Critical reflection was also a part of a grade-eight drama class in which the class stopped frequently to consider the work they had just completed. A critical approach to artistic production was built into the art classes in different ways. In one class, students were required to submit evaluative comments with their work. They were guided in this process by filling out a criteria sheet. In another class, the teacher’s dialogue with students about their work encouraged a critical approach by requiring students to justify their approach as well as answer questions about their choices. When the band had to re-play a section, they were given direction that encouraged critical reflection on their performance. They were also asked to think about the meaning of the music before they played again. One art student eagerly displayed his portfolio and then wanted to know which piece was favored. Once the choice had been made, the student demanded an explanation with the request, “Please tell me why you chose that one.”
The importance of evaluation was highlighted by Teacher 5's reflective comments.

That's one I've always struggled with. I guess it's about keeping students accountable and balancing that with self-improvement. It's about meeting a standard I've set by myself. It has to do with the quality of the program. It's one thing to do things just 'cause it's fun but there has to be more sense of pride. Your name should mean something; it shouldn't be garbage. Evaluation is a delicate thing with some students because then it becomes more about the mark than the work. I tell really talented actors at the start of the year that just because they are talented doesn't mean that they are going to get A's. If they just coast on their talent and don't really work to develop and grow then someone else who doesn't necessarily have the talent but who works really hard and takes risks may walk away with the A's. I try to mark them against themselves – I try to be as individual as I can.

Evaluation in the fine arts had the added element of performance to make it meaningful. As Teacher 3 pointed out, "From my perspective it's the group when they go out to performance that is the real evaluation. They know if they have done a good job or not, and that is evaluation."

Teachers spoke of feedback and communication as being other important aspects of evaluation. They also pointed to evaluation as a means "to encourage students to take the study of art as a serious discipline" echoing Seidel's (1994) comments that evaluation would have to be rigorous if the program was to be valued.

Teacher 1 elaborated on the knowledge provided by evaluation, saying:
Evaluation means feedback to students. It is a response back and a very, very important thing. Everybody needs to have knowledge back to know what they are doing and to affirm learning. Sometimes students need that to help them affirm for themselves what they have done because they don’t know how to tell themselves that they have done it and they need help. It is a way to acknowledge learning and a way to reward learning. It is putting words around it. Helping with the larger context of the discipline like work habits, etc.

Evaluation is just as important as the curriculum of art. Evaluation is key to communication and learning, but it is important to allow a period with non-judgement so that people are free to express and to do.

Teacher as Artist

The teachers in the Fine Arts Department appeared to be involved artists and their love of their discipline was evident. Frequent demonstrations in art classes showed the art teachers’ skill and familiarity with their subject. During one demonstration, Teacher 4 exclaimed, “I love doing this” in reference to the painting technique the students were learning. In a team-taught band class, Teacher 3 helped a section in need of assistance by picking up an instrument and enthusiastically playing along with the students. In setting up a mock audition situation for drama students to present their dialogues, the drama teacher remarked, “I’m still in the business so I can get friends to come and talk to the students or give them workshops.” In an art class, Teacher 6 explained, “I’ve been a potter for 25 years and I can’t stand the feel of dirt on my hands – as long as it’s liquid it’s OK, but dirt [grimace], so I understand how the kids feel.”
Teacher Energy

Teacher energy in the fine arts classrooms was also an indicator of the teachers' commitment to the arts. Teacher 4 encapsulated this well with the comment, “I don’t run a sit-in-your-desk class.” While everyone had an individual approach and distinct disciplines called for different procedures, teacher enthusiasm and energy were readily apparent in each class. In choir classes, the teacher both played the piano and sang along with the students throughout the class. The choir teacher’s energy was legendary. As a former district administrator said:

He has this extraordinary ability to teach choral music to everybody who comes in the door. Nobody can analyze it, nobody can do it the way he can do it, but everybody sings. He’s pouring out all this energy; kids walk into the room and sing. It just happens to fast they don’t know what hits them! (Kelly, 1995, p.80).

Teacher energy was on display in art as well. In one art room Teacher 6 ran to a bookshelf to find an example of an historical work that would help to inform the work of a student. In another art class, Teacher 4, while hustling to help yet another student, turned and said, “I never sit do I? I should be a stick woman.” The same teacher said, “I love grade nines because I can beat them at their own games – I’m much worse than they’ll ever have the energy to be” [comment followed by a devious chuckle].

In drama, Teacher 5 freely jumped into character to present students with observable examples. During one drama class, Teacher 5 moved constantly throughout the class working to keep the student energy for their project high.
the end of the class the energy of the students was waning but Teacher 5 was still
vibrant and actively striving to motivate the students.

Facilities

Physically, the Fine Arts Department is spread throughout the school with each
discipline in different areas. This physical detachment had a tendency to separate the
teachers so that they went about the business of teaching in their discipline without
daily contact with others from their department. In disciplines where there was more
than one teacher, frequent communication was observed; however, teachers whose
classrooms were far from each other were not observed to engage in regular
communication about their programs. While this appeared to be a factor of the size of
the school and the unique space demands of each discipline, it did make it difficult for
the Fine Arts Department to engage in frequent interdepartmental communication.
Vice-principal E viewed this physical separation as a drawback in terms of the fine
arts department being involved in participatory leadership. She remarked, “I mean,
they are a department and so they should decide as a department, and that’s difficult
because they are so diverse and so all over the school.” Year planning notes indicated
regular department meetings that apparently kept the department united and aware of
each discipline’s activities but people did comment on their feelings of isolation at
times.

While the facilities were not new, each classroom appeared very functional and
equipped to run a viable program. During the various phases of the observation,
teachers were not heard to complain about their facilities, and one teacher commented
that the fine arts department was fortunate to have the space that it had. She observed, “Look, lots of schools would give anything for this facility.”

All of the art rooms were on a lower level of the main building but, even though they were in the basement they all had outside windows albeit with grating across them. These outside windows allowed natural light into the rooms, which enhanced many art activities. These large rooms provided: ample provision for storage of art materials and projects; sinks so projects were not limited due to inadequate cleanup facilities; and cupboards that closed and locked for safe storage of projects and materials. Each room had at least one wall covered in evenly spaced wood strips to allow for the hanging of art, to facilitate class critiques, student appreciation of hung work, and samples of student art. The clay room contained three kilns and a lockable storage room. It also had large storage shelving in a back corner so projects could be safely stored while they were in progress and green-ware could be adequately stored while it was drying. The photography room opened into a long narrow darkroom that could also be entered from the hallway thus allowing for students to continue working in safelight conditions while their classmates entered and exited.

The choir room was a large classroom on the second floor with big windows along one wall, and high ceilings to provide reasonable acoustics. A series of three permanent risers with each level wide enough for two rows of chairs provided four levels so that classes could stand to sing without obstructing each other’s view of the conductor. The front of the room was equipped with blackboards, a large table, a piano, large speakers, several hanging mikes, wiring, microphones for solo singing and an entry door into a capacious storage room. The remaining walls of the room were
covered with musical theatre posters as well as collages of concert photos. One of the blackboards was full of information detailing the current concert schedule. On each subsequent visit to the school it was noted that the schedule was constantly changing.

The drama room, in a building that was separate from the main physical plant, was a double size classroom, half of which was curtained off to provide a small stage and backstage area. The size allowed for a wide variety of drama activities. A slightly raised stage area with a black plywood floor allowed for authentic staging. The stage area also had ceiling rails for hanging lights so that technical aspects of theatre might also be addressed in drama classes. A VCR/TV and a video camera were used in drama exercises. Painted cinder-block walls made the room soundproof ensuring drama classes did not disrupt other classes. The room also contained a teacher office and a large locking storage cupboard for props. This very workable drama space was created through a great deal of teacher initiative and administrative support. In 1994, “a woodwork shop was converted into studio space suitable for one-act plays” (Kelly, 1995, p. 82).

Carpeting, sound baffles on the walls, high ceilings, and built-in risers made the band room an excellent place for musical performance. There were practice rooms along one side of the room at its lowest level and an instrument storage room and teacher office along the other side. Other amenities included blackboards across the front of the room, a baby grand piano, an electric keyboard, a base guitar, an amp, and music storage shelves. With high windows on three walls and musical instruments throughout the room, it was a comfortable practice facility for a large band.
Thus, aside from the disadvantage of the Fine Arts classes being spread throughout the school, the physical plant provided the department with enviable space and facilities that accommodated a varied program.

**Funding**

The issue of funding frequently came up in conversation with the teachers in the fine arts. It appeared that funding is an endemic problem in the fine arts but there was not a feeling that anyone within the school was being singled out for blame. One teacher encapsulated the general feeling of the fine arts teachers with the comment, “We struggle with funds. How do we get instruments, reeds, etc? We have more band students next year and less funds. How will we do it?” Another comment suggested that the fine arts teachers feel that money gets pulled from arts programs because “we are options, we don’t count.”

The fine arts teachers’ commitment to excellence was apparent in the area of funding as well because, as Teacher 4 suggested, “It is important to use good materials so that the students have a valid experience.” The teacher went on to suggest that certain activities would be avoided rather than expecting students to work with inadequate materials. While this approach may have caused some difficulty for the teacher in planning the program, it allowed students to internalize the understanding that their work was worthy of good materials. The artist-quality materials that the students were using meant that their production results were of high quality and, since artwork was displayed prominently throughout the school, this also had a positive impact on the department’s standing in the school.
When asked directly about funding for their program, teacher's responses were varied. Teacher 3 remarked:

The budget is awful. It is pathetic and it makes it hard. We just have no money. It would be really nice to have new music but we usually have to use the old stuff and it works, but it is hard. Within the city it is the same. It is so frustrating because you know damn well that thousands is spent on computers and they are no good in a few years whereas some of the instruments in there were bought 35 years ago and they are still good and being used.

Teacher 4 indicated why department attitudes towards the budget might be varied with the observation that:

The budget is closed. I don’t know where the money goes or how it is allocated. $60,000 spent on tech – I haven’t sat mumbling; I’ve spent time talking to people. There is always a whole list but the art department is being ripped off. I’m not prepared to go to anymore meetings. We thought it was going to be better when the money was put into the schools, but it has gotten a whole lot worse. People with more time or more influence get the money.

Thus, the perception that the budget is fair is no. There has been a lot in the papers about technology – head of department at another school said he didn’t have books. I’m sick of having to run about the school and beg. I suppose I can join a Fine Arts committee so we can all sit about together and complain, but will that help? But this is not just our school. The cost of computers – that’s expensive equipment – and education should not just boil down to computers.
Teacher 1 was more philosophical about the issue and suggested that:

Part of the nature of art is being flexible and creative with resources. In the large picture you can see the cuts. District cuts were really felt. They cut the fine arts coordinator and that makes a difference. But we could try to keep the integrity of the school. We tend to find that most things we want to do, we can.

When asked about problems, however, Teacher 1 suggested that, “other than dollars, we don’t have problems” thereby tacitly acknowledging that funding was indeed an issue.

Teachers also spoke of the difficulty of having to have student fees to buy the supplies needed to run an effective program. Since observation was only done in fine arts classes, however, it was impossible to comment on teacher reaction to funding in other disciplines. It was also important to note that funding levels within the School Board as a whole were down, so that all classes were affected.

Responses to the funding issue were not all negative because there were several teachers who noted that they generally did not have complaints about the budget. Teacher 2 was both philosophical and basically content which was illustrated by his comment, “It’s as good as we’ll get it. I can always get money.” The drama department also appeared to have few complaints with the budget overall although they were concerned about the coming year, because as Teacher 5 said:

I don’t have any complaints. I’ve always gotten what I’ve asked for, but I’ve always subsidized [my program] with money from the pop machine and a little money from shows. The pop machine money is gone this year because they
have a different contract, so it will be interesting to see what happens and how I manage.

Administrator’s comments regarding funding were not always congruent with the feelings of the teachers. Principal D noted, “I’ll make sure it [the fine arts program] has appropriate funding and staff allocations.” Principal C indicated that one of his considerations was that “in times of shrinking budgets I supported the fine arts program by seeing that they had their share” and that this also included “an involvement with fund raising to make sure that fine arts got their share.”

**The Role of the Arts in the School’s Reform**

It was quite clear that the instigator of the reform, Principal B, did not consider the art program as a mitigating factor; however, her comments also showed that she was referring to art in particular and not to the whole fine arts program. Her comments were specific to the fact that, in her view, creating a strong fine arts program was not the impetus for the school reform. When school staff were questioned, however, the response was overwhelmingly positive regarding the role of the fine arts department in the school’s exemplary status except for one who responded:

Honestly, I think it was a minor consideration. I was a student teacher here so I saw the interviewing going on. In staff meetings what was mentioned was the multiplicity of the program at the school. I think that they would have given the exemplary status without the fine arts program.

The fine arts program may not have been the sole element that garnered the school’s exemplary status; however, many current teachers and administrators as well as one
past administrator viewed the role of the fine arts program as a favorable factor and were unequivocal in their belief that the fine arts program “absolutely contributed to the school’s exemplary status.” Vice-principal F expressed the belief that the fine arts program contributed to the school’s exemplary status because:

it contributes incredibly to the kids’ sense of self-efficacy. When our kids went to New Jersey, and they were in this atmosphere where bands and that approach are really important, and get a tremendous amount of support in the school and they are really held up, our kids came second and here they were working class kids from the east side and they came second; and it made a huge difference in how they saw themselves; and it made a difference when they came back to how they communicated that to the whole school. Their feelings of importance and personal value are so enhanced by the arts and what they learn and accomplish.

Staff in both the fine arts program and the rest of the school expressed the belief that the fine arts program did contribute to the school’s exemplary status, although they had varied reasons for this perception. When asked, “Did the fine arts contribute to the school’s exemplary status?” teachers and administrators responded with a range of reasons why they felt that the program had contributed. One teacher indicated that the program contributed because it “helped to draw the kids together and give them more voice.” Other teachers also spoke of the ability of the arts program to draw students together and alluded to this as being important in a school with such a diverse student population. In addition to drawing the student body together, however, teachers also felt that the arts “brought discipline.” One teacher reflected the views of many, while
referring to one of the aims of the reform effort and to the school’s exemplary status, when he said “I think to be exemplary you have to offer a variety of programs and quality too.” The issue of quality was raised by many teachers because they felt that the “successful outcomes of the programs (Music/Drama and Arts Awards) all contributed” to the school’s reformed status as an exemplary school. Other staff considered that the fine arts program was able to contribute to the school’s exemplary status because “we have outstanding teachers.”

One teacher spoke eloquently of the role that the fine arts program played in the school’s reform when she itemized the ways that the program contributed to the school. She explained that the fine arts program was instrumental because:

a) many of our students achieve little success in academics but can shine in fine arts, b) the publics’ acclaim of our fine band and art programs give students and teachers pride in their school, and c) the art department often focuses on ecological and environmental activism so students can make a real difference in the world.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Boston (1996) has contended that “no one should be under any illusion that there is a universal panacea for the complex and multi-layered issues of school reform and change. But we can make progress in trying out what appear to be good ideas” (p. xv).

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of teacher and administrator leadership on the development of an exemplary arts program. The study also sought to determine the role of the arts program in a school that had engaged in the process of reform so that it was declared exemplary. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

4) What was the impact of administrator and teacher leadership in school reform and on the development of the arts program?

5) What were the outcomes associated with the arts program that contributed to the school’s reform and its exemplary status, if any?

6) What elements within the school’s culture supported reform and the arts program?

This single site case study examined a secondary school that had been identified in 1995 in the Canadian Education Association’s Exemplary Schools Project as a model exemplary school. Although its Fine Arts program was not the reason for its designation as an exemplary school, the study did note that the school had a great arts program that “involves students in the school” (Kelly, 1995, p. 80). Because the 1995 Report of the Exemplary Schools Project noted that the school “was in the
process of turning itself around" (Kelly, 1995, p. 2) and that part of its reform initiative has “multiplied [the] opportunities for leadership” (Kelly, 1995, p. 16), the school was an ideal place to study the impact of teacher and administrator leadership in the school’s reform. The school also provided an ideal site to study the impact of leadership on the development of an exemplary arts program and the role that the arts program played in the school’s reform.

In order to address the research questions, observations were conducted on three separate visits over a three-month period. In addition, three past principals, the current principal, the current vice-principals, the arts teachers and other teachers in the school were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format.

Summary

Since 1990, the school has had administrators who cultivated the importance of teacher leadership. While encouraging teacher leadership was not a focus from 1982 – 1990, teacher initiative was accepted by the administration at that time, as long as teachers were willing to present cogent arguments for their ideas. This was a school that for the past 17 years had valued teacher enterprise and initiative and had supported strong teachers. Current and past administrators pointed to the importance of good teachers in the building of a successful program and indicated that hiring strong teachers was an issue of great importance.

Current school administrators were unified in their belief that teacher leadership was a fundamental component of a strong program. Both the principal and vice-principals in the school exhibited a firm belief that “teacher leadership is essential for a successful program but also essential in terms of providing direction for the school.”
The current principal highlighted a fundamental element in supporting teacher leadership in the school when he observed, “people don’t take ownership without responsibility – they need to be trusted.”

Administrative leadership in this school was very responsive to the value of having a strong arts program in the school. Each current administrator pointed to the importance of the arts program and was readily able to identify ways in which he or she was able to support the program. As one vice-principal declared, “attitude is really important and how I respond shows a lot.” Since all of the current administrators were able to list ways that they demonstrated their positive attitude towards the arts program, administrative leadership in the school was seen to have had a positive impact on the arts program.

The members of the arts department exhibited a high degree of leadership capability although they did not always label their behaviors as leadership. They strove to make their programs strong and, in doing so, exhibited initiative and proactive leadership behaviors. They were supported in their enterprise by administration. Long-standing members of the fine arts department had the confidence to protest administrative decisions that they did not feel were in the best interests of their programs.

Schlechty’s (cited in Brandt, 1993) comments that “instructional leadership and curriculum leadership are imbedded in the job of teaching” were echoed by one art teacher and practiced by the teachers in the fine arts department. Even though the teachers did not articulate the leadership functions imbedded in their normal practice, their leadership behaviors were clearly observable.
Arts teacher leadership at the study site did not necessarily extend to heavy involvement in the development of the school’s mission and goals. Nevertheless, because the whole school community was involved in the development of the school’s mission and goals, arts teachers did have involvement, and it was reflected in the aesthetic component of the school’s mission. As Seidel (1994) has expressed:

By encouraging ownership of a clearly defined organizational vision, such transformational leadership is especially effective with arts programs for a number of reasons. The cooperative effort that goes into developing such a shared direction of purpose can help breach perceived and real chasms between the organizational cultures of arts departments and administrations (p. 11).

This greater awareness on the part of the arts teachers could have arisen because “the process of defining the school’s mission and goals with the arts program faculty communicates the message that the arts are expected to become an important part of the school’s work” (Seidel, 1994, p. 11).

Teacher and administrator leadership in the school had a positive impact on the development of the arts program. The school had a long history of administrators who value teacher leadership and initiative. The school also had a series of administrators who believed in hiring the best arts teachers they could. This resulted in an arts program that had a strong component of teacher leadership and garnered effective administrative support. It was not surprising that the fine arts program at the school was exemplary.

Because the school had a succession of administrators who not only believed “that any program success rested entirely with the teacher” but also believed that part
of their role was “choosing good staff;” the school had a strong teaching staff. In addition to a belief that “the key to any school is staffing,” the principal responsible for instigating the school’s reform worked hard “to create an environment that invites initiative-takers to step forward” (Kelly, 1995, p. 17). The reform effort in this school had been based on a firm conviction that leadership was a necessary element in successful reform, thereby confirming the assertion in the literatures that leadership was “a key ingredient in any successful school reform” (Bell, 1993, p. 597).

The school culture was accepting and supportive of the fine arts program. Teachers in other programs valued the contribution that the arts program made to both the school and the students. Because the initial reform of the school was premised on the belief that student needs had to be met, school reform was not modeled on a preconceived formula. Rather the schools-within-a-school model grew out of a desire to meet the diverse needs of the school population. One school administrator who was involved in the planning for the school reform envisioned the fine arts program as having the capacity to “provide the glue” that could “hold all those programs together.” This vision contributed to the fine arts program being viewed as an integral component of the reform efforts taken by the school. As a result, many within the school community perceived the fine arts program as an important component of the school and a contributing factor in the school’s exemplary status.

The school culture may have been willing to accept the arts program as an important element of the school for several reasons. Several teachers both in the arts and in the rest of the school mentioned the “positive press” that the arts have brought to the school. The visual arts teachers were adept at getting student art displayed
outside of the school and that had brought positive feedback into the school. Bands had won awards and bands had performed in concerts in downtown malls and at other venues in the city. Because the band program was incredibly strong, this also took the school out to the community in a very positive way. Drama students had consistently won awards at the city drama festival, again highlighting the school as a successful place. Choir students regularly gave concerts at Senior’s Homes and at other venues throughout the city. The school choir program built such a good name that the choir received frequent invitations to perform at a variety of functions and was well known throughout the city. All of this reflected positively on the school and gave its constituents something of which to be proud. Such a high percentage of the school population was involved in the arts program that it was easy for the accomplishments of the arts program to be accepted as “our” accomplishments. As one teacher said of the arts program’s accomplishments, “all add to the prestige of a school often unjustly attacked in the press.”

In reforming itself, the school had to make some major changes in structure and delivery methods. Having been identified as exemplary in the midst of this major reform created a climate in which the cultural shifts the reform necessitated were more readily accepted. The common reference to the change in people’s perceptions brought about by the school’s identification as exemplary brought to mind Fullan’s (1996) comments about “reculturing” as being the “process of developing new values, beliefs, and norms” (p. 422). The arts program also garnered positive feedback, which aided the cultural shift because it promoted altered perceptions of the school.
While school leadership was not a focus prior to 1990, the school has had principals who espouse the value of a comprehensive education since 1982. Past principals said they did not value the arts more than they valued other subjects but stressed that all subjects were important. The current principal said he viewed the arts as “essential” and also expressed the belief that “the arts should be seen as an essential component to a complete educational package.” The teachers in the fine arts department at the school clearly viewed the subjects they taught as vital elements in the education of all students and worked to make their programs authentic and connected to students’ lives outside of the classroom. This was a program built upon the understanding that the arts were an integral component of a complete education package. Also, because of strong arts faculty input, the program had a high degree of accessibility and provided genuine experiences for students.

The fine arts program in the school was offered as a comprehensive program that incorporated both theory and practice in all disciplines. This format was congruent with the literature suggesting that an effective arts program was one where students were actively engaged in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the arts (Boston, 1996; Burnham, 1997; Day, 1998; Dilger, 1997; Hatfield, 1998). There was an effort on the part of all arts teachers in the school to present each discipline as a subject requiring serious study. High standards were maintained throughout the department which was compatible with Goodwin’s (1997) directive that arts educators “must work to ensure that dance education, music education, theatre education and visual arts education programs are substantive, rigorous and relevant” (p. 16). In addition, evaluation was taken seriously and was integrated into each discipline so...
students were exposed to the importance of reflection and critique as a central element of arts practice. Evaluation practices were consistent with the understanding that evaluative rigor would promote program rigor (Seidel, 1994). Wherever possible, performance was incorporated into the program as a vital and real portion of the evaluation process.

This school was, as Kelly (1995) has suggested, a “great big school.” It was a school that chose to meet the educational requirements of its diverse student population by providing a variety of programs. The “great big school” had both physical size and program differentiation working in concert to make it challenging to create a community spirit within its walls. In spite of these factors, however, the school was a strong community, and one that inspired pride in its students. One of the administrators who helped to author the school’s reform perceived the arts program as having the capacity to bring the disparate elements together so that all within the school’s community had an element of common experience. His memories of the reform indicated that the fine arts were an “integral component.”

All of the administrators who were currently in the school believed that the arts program had a positive impact on the school and were generally convinced that the arts program contributed to the school’s exemplary status. One current school administrator believed that the arts program had a tremendous impact in the school. He was not convinced, however, that the school had changed all that dramatically and believed instead that “the exemplary schools report made people realize that the school had something great to offer” so that “they started looking beyond the image.” Principals and vice-principals all expounded on the importance of the arts program in
the school. When asked if the arts program contributed to the school’s exemplary status, the most common response was, “absolutely.”

Teachers who were on site during the years of the school’s reform varied in their estimation of the impact that the arts program had in the school’s reform. Teachers who were not engaged in teaching the arts tended to have a more positive view of the arts programs’ impact in the school and in the school’s exemplary designation than teachers in the arts department did. Teachers from outside the arts department were willing to list the many contributions the arts made to the school and to list the contributions in terms of the whole arts program. Arts teachers were more cautious. One art teacher believed that the arts program had little impact on the school’s being declared exemplary, but others responded positively. Arts teachers who believed that the arts program had a definite impact on the school’s exemplary status tended to make their assertions from the perspective of their own discipline and did not always see the contribution as a product of the fine arts department as a whole.

Conclusions

This study sought to examine the impact of teacher and administrator leadership in school reform and on the development of the arts program. It also sought to discover the outcomes associated with the arts program that contributed to the school’s reform and its exemplary status. Additionally, this study sought to discern what elements within the school’s culture supported reform and the arts program. The following conclusions are warranted from the examination of this exemplary school:

1) It became clear that teachers and administrators conceptualized school leadership roles very differently. Although the fine arts teachers regularly
engaged in proactive leadership behaviors, they did not view what they did on a daily basis as involving leadership. Their actions and opinions suggested that leadership was a role for someone else or else they spoke of leadership as if it was apart from them. When teachers were questioned directly about specific behaviors that could easily be construed as leadership, they demurred and said, “oh yes, well I do *that* but that’s just part of my job.”

2) Teachers, for the most part, viewed themselves as teachers and did not conceptualize their actions as containing elements of leadership. Administrators, on the other hand, viewed leadership in the actions of teachers and often commented upon those behaviors as contributing to the efficacy of the program and the school. As administrators, however, they conceptualized those behaviors as leadership, whereas teachers construed the same behaviors as “just doing what I do.” These opposing views had the capacity to hinder communication since the vocabulary the two groups were employing was disparate.

3) Teachers did not view themselves as having the deterministic power that they had over their programs. Principals and vice-principals, on the other hand, viewed teachers as having a great deal of power to determine program strength. Principals made comments such as; “any program success rests entirely with the teacher,” “if you have a good teacher you can have a good program in a tent --- it’s not about resources or the room, it’s about the teacher,” and “the key is to get good staff.”
4) Teachers vacillated between recognition of the their own power to
determine program strength and the principal's level of control. One
teacher indicated that “unless there is huge support from administration,” it
was hard to have a strong arts program. In another instance, a teacher
expressed the view that one principal “just about destroyed the program.
She got it down to one full-time teacher.” Contrasting with those
comments were the comments by teachers suggesting that the “key is
hiring” because “programs will run themselves if you have the right people.
Get the right people and then let them do the job” and “who is directing
affects the program. The program really is the director. Great coach pretty
good team – lousy coach pretty bad team.” After making the point that the
key was hiring, this teacher also said, however, “resources and facilities
have to be there,” thus implying a dichotomy. Consequently, the teacher
created the program but could not escape a certain measure of dependence
on school administration.

These modes of understanding their position in the school highlighted the
understanding of individual reality proposed by Schein (1992) when he
said “individual reality refers to what a person has learned from her or his
own experience and that therefore has a quality of absolute truth to that
person. However, that truth may not be shared with anyone else” (p. 100).
Schein pointed to the necessity of being able to “clearly articulate what our
actual experience base is” so that we could “move forward” (p. 100).
5) School culture accepted the arts program because “the public acclaim gave students and teachers pride in their school.” Because the arts program brought “positive recognition to the school, which was often unjustly treated by the press.” Staff and students saw the arts program as a positive feature of the school that provided rewards for the school community. This attitude reflected Weiss’s (1995) observations “that people’s values will affect their receptivity” (p. 577). The school culture was receptive to the arts program because it was viewed as providing positive benefits to the school community.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are warranted from this examination of the exemplary school:

1) Teacher leaders tend to engage in unconscious leadership. Because they do not construe what they do to be leadership, they are often unaware of the power they have. Further studies could investigate the impact on teachers, programs, and reform if teachers were taught to perceive their actions differently.

2) Further studies are needed to illuminate the capacity of teachers to determine program strength, because this has implications for school reform.

3) Teachers and administrators understand leadership differently, and this disparity can contribute to poor communication. Further studies are needed to increase understanding of the lack of common vocabulary between teachers and administrators.
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What are they saying about Arts education and effective school reform?


Appendix A

Impact of Administrator and Teacher Leadership on the Development of an Exemplary Arts Program and its Role in School Reform:
A Case Study

Case Study Protocol
Protocol for Case Study of the Arts Program at the research site

Schedule

First Visit – Monday, May 3, 1999
- meet with Vice Principal
discuss school issues and congruence of research goals
- meet Principal
outline research goals
gain an understanding of his concerns and wishes
- meet with Head of Fine Arts Department – art teacher #1
observe two art classes
gather names of Arts Department:
- art teacher #2
- art teacher #3
- band teacher #1
- band teacher #2
- drama teacher
- choir teacher
make initial observational notes and familiarize myself with the school

Interim work
- letters to individual members of arts department outlining research approach
and introducing myself

Second Visit – at a mutually agreed upon time in late September 1999.

Observational guidelines
- continued holistic observation of school within the context of gaining an
understanding of leadership structure
- collection of documentation of school’s vision, mission and goals
further meetings and informal interviews with administration
further meeting and informal interview with head of arts department
meeting and informal interviews with arts teachers
- spend time in each teacher’s class observing students and routines
note – during this time the researcher will also be taking appropriate facility
photos and recording detailed observations whenever possible

ongoing informal interviews and observations
time spent in individual classes with a focus on no more than two per day
(schedule to be worked out with individual teachers once on sight)
attention to congruence of stated purpose and action

ongoing informal interviews and observations
time spent in individual classes (schedule to be worked out with individual
teachers once on sight)
attention to congruence of stated purpose and actions

ongoing informal interviews and observations
time spent in individual classes
attention to congruence of stated purpose and actions
* Before leaving school researcher ensured that collected data included:
  general sense of facility for each arts discipline
  photographs
  collection of documents

Prior to visit letters sent to all parties reminding them of my goals and upcoming presence.

Ongoing attempts to find and communicate with past principals and arts teachers

Third Visit to – on mutually agreed upon dates in October of 1999.

  Observational Guidelines
  reassessment of holistic observation of school while maintaining a focus on the context of leadership structure
  - meetings and informal interviews with administration
  - meeting and informal interview with head of arts department head
  - meeting and informal interviews with arts teachers
  - observation in classes and informal interviews with arts teachers
  - consideration of leadership factors and goals for year
  - attention to gaps which have become apparent through member checks of preliminary report
  - attention to holes in information that have become apparent to researcher during time in school and preliminary report writing
  - final assessment and observation of leadership issues

Phone interviews with past principals who responded to mailed requests for interviews (Appendix D).

Prior to visit, letters sent to all parties reminding them of my goals and upcoming presence (Appendix C).

Fourth Visit – at arranged date in November of 1999
Guiding Questions
Constituents: Administration (A), Teacher (T)

LEADERSHIP FACTORS
(A, T)

Does decision making regarding the arts program involve both those making the decision and those affected by the decision?
What are faculty opinions and descriptions of instructional leadership?
To what extent does administration support the arts program?
(what leadership behaviors demonstrate this support?)
What approach do administration/department head/faculty take in dealing with challenges?
(what leadership behaviors show this?)
Is there a clearly understood approach for dealing with problems and challenges?
(are there tangible leadership behaviors which show this?)
Does the administration work together with faculty to provide a schedule that is conducive to a strong arts program?
Does the administration communicate the arts program’s value to the whole school?
Does the school’s budget reflect a commitment to the arts?
Do the individual arts teachers exhibit leadership behaviors in the way that they conduct their program?

CULTURE
(School and Arts Program) (A, T)

Does the school have a written statement of purpose that guides the instructional program?
(do the daily activities of staff and students reflect buy-in to the school’s stated purpose?)
Is attention paid to congruence of goals between the arts program and the school as a whole?
(is maintaining/developing a strong arts program important to the school community?)
(if it exists - what is the nature of dissent?)
What importance do the constituents place upon focussed evaluation schemes in the arts program?
(do teachers see this as an important aspect of program strength?)
(how do other staff members view the evaluation in the arts?)
How does the school’s community celebrate student achievement in the arts?
CURRICULUM  
(Arts Program) (A, T)

Does the faculty support a broad range of activities in each discipline?  
(do students engage in critical activities, production, and performance?)
Does the faculty believe that worthwhile arts programs include the theoretical and practical aspects of each discipline?  
(how is this evidenced in each classroom?)
What are the students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the arts curriculum? 
Does the arts program consider the student's ability to think creatively and express themselves creatively in a range of manners within each arts discipline? 
Does the school attempt to provide arts programs that are relevant to all students?

REFORM  
(A, T)

Do members of the staff feel that the arts program made a difference in the school's reform?  
How does the staff view reform? 
Does the staff feel that this is a continuing process? 
What does the staff feel was the turning point for the school? 
How was this accomplished?

GENERAL OBSERVATIONAL THEMES  
FACILITIES (A, T)

How appropriate are the facilities? 
- for teaching purposes - for storage purposes - student work space - display areas  
- do they hamper or enhance the program?
Appendix B

Impact of Teacher and Administrator Leadership on the Development of an Exemplary Arts Program and its Role in School Reform: A Case Study

Research Request Letters
September ___, 1999

Dear ____________:

I am a teacher engaged in research for my doctoral dissertation through the University of Montana. My research is a case study of __________ _______ School entitled “The Impact of Teacher and Administrator Leadership on the Development of an Exemplary Arts Program and its Role in School Reform: A Case Study. I am particularly interested in the school’s turnaround, its arts program and in the nature of teacher and administrator leadership. Since you were the principal during the time of the school’s reform I would value talking to you to get your perspective. As a colleague, I know how busy you are and would be happy to conduct my informal interview at a time which best suited your schedule.

I want to reassure you that your name will not appear in my dissertation and any information you provide will be kept confidential. The school will not be identified either although in-depth description could conceivably make it possible for readers familiar with the school to discern which school was being studied. It is therefore possible that a reader who was able to identify the school could, in some cases, also identify who is being quoted. You will be mailed the portion of the report that contains reference to the information you supplied so that you can assess the reliability of the reporting of the interview.

Although there is no perceived risk in this study, the University of Montana requires that the following statement be included:

In the event that you are injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University’s Claims Representative or University Legal Counsel.

I have included a stamped, addressed envelope as well as a consent form as an easy way for you to inform me of your willingness to be interviewed.

Your input would add a great deal to my research and I would be very grateful if you would take part.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Michelle Wiebe Zederayko
Consent Form

I have read the letter included with this consent form and understand the purpose of this study. I am willing to participate in your research and consent to an interview. I understand that my anonymity will be protected and that my name will not appear anywhere in either the completed dissertation or in any drafts of the document. I also understand that I may drop out of this study at any time.

__________________________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________
Appendix C

Impact of Teacher and Administrator Leadership on the Development of an Exemplary Arts Program and its Role in School Reform: A Case Study

Letters to Fine Arts Teachers
October 26, 1999

School Address

Attention: ___________

Art Teacher

Dear __________:

Re: Return Research Visit from Michelle Zederayko
    November 8th, 9th

I am writing to remind you that I will be in the school on November 8th and 9th. We had tentatively set November the 9th during G block as a time when you might be able to spare me a few minutes to answer some questions. I recall you also mentioned that it would be a particularly busy time for you so I am hoping that we will be able to talk briefly.

I can be reached via fax at 250-494-3493, phone at 250-494-2243 (home) or 250-494-3461 (work), or email at mzederayko@img.net if you have any questions or concerns.

I am looking forward to being on site at __________ again and hope that our proposed meeting works out.

Sincerely,

Michelle Wiebe Zederayko
Appendix D

Impact of Teacher and Administrator Leadership on the Development of an Exemplary Arts Program and its Role in School Reform: A Case Study

Interview Guidelines
Faculty questions

1. Do you feel that you are consulted about decisions that will affect the arts program?

2. How would you define instructional leadership?

3. Do you think that instructional leadership is important in building a strong school and/or arts program?

4. How are problems in the arts program dealt with?

5. Do you feel you understand the approach to dealing with challenges?

6. Do you think that administration supports your program?

7. Does administration work with you to provide a schedule that is conducive to your program?

8. Do you think that the budget in the school is fair to the arts?

9. Do you feel that the arts program is valued in the school?

10. Do you feel that the arts program contributed to the school’s exemplary status?

11. What do you do personally to strengthen your program?

12. Do you feel that this school is growing and changing?

13. Do you consciously try to make your class goals fit the goals of the school?

14. What do you view as the role of evaluation in your program?
Present and Past Administration

1. Is/was it important to you to have a strong arts program in the school?

2. Do/did you do anything to communicate the importance of the arts to the whole school?

3. What do/did you do to ensure that the arts program is supported?

4. What is/was your goal for the school?

5. Is/was it important to include the fine arts teachers in decision making about their program?

6. What is/was your view of instructional leadership?

7. Do/did you feel that the fine arts program contributed to the school’s exemplary status?